

The Alpha and Omega and Lampstands
Metaphors:
A Linguistic Theory of Metaphor as Applied
to the Book of Revelation

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The Alpha and Omega and Lampstands Metaphors:
A Linguistic Theory of Metaphor as Applied to the Book of Revelation

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ABSTRACT

Studies of the Book of Revelation, and more specifically the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3-4, whom John identifies as the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth, begin with outlines of the various theological positions that scholars take in approaching the Book of Revelation and how this affects the way one should interpret the passage.

This study eschews an avowed theological position for a linguistic one. Rather than slavishly relying upon a theological tradition that demands one interpret Revelation using either literal or figurative means, one posits that an examination of the linguistic situation of Rev. 11:3-4, particularly the avenues by which linguistic metaphors work, demonstrates that Rev. 11:3-4 contains a linguistic metaphor. That metaphor is “The two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.” In other words, the conventions of language determine the way one should interpret Rev. 11:3-4, not a theological position.

That said, one demonstrates that metaphors work in many ways relying upon the relationship between the literal and the figurative to communicate, creatively, meaning that is memorable. Of interest to this study in this creative relationship is a theory of systems of associated commonplaces, as Black originally suggested. Black argues that in understanding metaphors, that is, in comparing one substantive by another, a list of common associations that groups of speakers possess concerning each compared substantive governs and constrains the potential meaning(s) for the metaphor.

Moreover, since one cannot separate the lampstands metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4 from its relationship to the temple, one begins with an overview of the theological disputes and studies regarding the nature of the temple in the Book of Revelation. An argument from the lesser to the greater may clarify this discussion. That is, if one part of the temple furniture that John describes is metaphorical, e.g. lampstands, then perhaps all the furniture, and the temple itself, are metaphorical. For this argument, one examines the linguistic idea of metaphorical primes in communication, that is, authors and speakers will often “prime” hearers and readers by using metaphors, in order that hearers and readers can expect additional metaphors and figures of speech.

One then defines terms and types of metaphors, and explores several linguistic metaphors in Rev. 1, including the alpha and omega metaphor and the metaphor of the seven churches are the seven lampstands. These definitions and terms, and the metaphors of Rev. 1, particularly the lampstands metaphor, then serve as a basis for the way John uses the metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4 as it relates to lampstands as well.

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Finally,

ἄξιος εἶ, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν,

λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν,

ὅτι σὺ ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα

καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημα σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.¹

¹ Rev. 4:11

1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Although Titus Flavius Vespasianus destroyed Jerusalem, along with its second, Herodian temple, in 70 CE, the Israelite temple remains one of the most fascinating and captivating topics within religious and biblical studies. Authors have written thousands of books on its history, archaeology, purpose, and liturgy, to name a few, attesting to its popularity.² Scholars from all over the world debate its socio-religious and political role, not only within Judaism and Christianity, but also in religions like Mormonism and Islam,³ as well as in secular, global politics. There is little doubt that the Jerusalem temple is a polarizing topic.⁴

Among the many deliberations is the Jewish temple's function or role, if any, in Christianity, both in the first century and subsequent centuries, including the possibility of a rebuilt, future eschatological Jewish temple.⁵ The book of Revelation, or the Apocalypse of John, and its portrayal of the temple, figures prominently in this discussion as John permeates his work with temple language and images.⁶ It is the purpose of this dissertation to explore a small part of

² A search and survey of Google Books regarding the Jerusalem temple produces between 744,000 and 8,850,000 results. These results depend on whether one is specifically searching for the physical structure, 744,000 results, or other related topics, such as liturgy or taxes, 8,850,000 results.

³ At a popular level, Hamblin and Seely outline the temple's general importance to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely, *Solomon's Temple: Myth and History*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007). Ofer Livne-Kafri offers a short summary of some Islamic traditions regarding the Jewish Temple, namely those espoused by Jewish converts to Islam, including the identification of the Dome of the Rock with the "new" temple, Ofer Livne-Kafri, "Jerusalem in Early Islam: The Eschatological Aspect," *Arabica* T. 53, Fasc. 3 (July 2006).

⁴ One can read about some of the current political hostilities in Joshua Hammer, "What is Beneath the Temple Mount?," *Smithsonian Magazine* April 2011 (accessed February 7, 2014).

⁵ There are certainly different views as to the role of the temple within Judaism as well, but the concern here is with Christianity. For instance, the community at Qumran may have metaphorically or typologically believed they were the real temple, as opposed to the physical structure in Jerusalem, so Abel Mordechai Bibliowicz, *Jews and Gentiles in the Early Jesus Movement: An Unintended Journey*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 14.

⁶ Here we assume the following: the use of "John" for the authorship of Revelation, finding it unnecessary to conclude affirmatively the exact identity of John; the Apocalypse is the work of one hand; the date for Revelation is circa AD 95. For more on authorship, unity, and date see David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*. ed. Ralph P. Martin, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), xlviii-lxx. See also Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Carlisle: W. B. Eerdmans; The Paternoster Press, 1999), 4-27, 34-35.

this last category. One will study John's metaphorical use of lampstands in Revelation, initially in Rev. 1:20, and more specifically in Rev. 11:3-4, as a means of positing a critical approach to John's portrayal of the temple in the Apocalypse.

To frame the exploration of the study of the lampstands in Rev. 1:20 and 11:3-4, one explored certain background issues, such as how scholars and traditions interpret the narrative stories of the New Testament gospels and the Book of Acts regarding the temple. This is because an early study of lampstands quickly revealed that John's metaphors likely drew upon the close relationship between the lampstands' location in the OT tabernacle/temple and the tabernacle/temple itself.

One also sought to understand the references to temple in Paul and other letters, and finally, and more specifically for this inquiry, the temple references in the book of Revelation.⁷ As history and modern scholarship regard the Book of Revelation as a Christian document, the inquiry focused on Christian traditions. The results of this general background inquiry revealed that traditions divide into two broad categories: a figurative temple replaces a physical Jewish temple and the physical temple is not necessary to Christianity, and a physical Jewish temple is critical to Christianity and its eschatological hope.

Contemporarily, Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant streams within Christianity argue for a figurative understanding of the role of the temple.⁸ These groups assert that the gospels, particularly John,⁹ indicate that the physical body of Jesus supplants the role or function

⁷ This is not to exclude later Christian documents, such as patristic literature. In fact, they are necessary in determining how certain traditions or trajectories developed after the New Testament.

⁸ This concept is not unknown in Judaism, particularly at Qumran, where the community there is associated with the temple, so Walter H. Lumpkin, "A Comparative Study of the Concept of Temple and Its Imagery in the Writings of the Qumran Community and in the Apocalypse" (Dissertation, Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991), 72.

⁹ E.g. John 2:19-21.

of the Jerusalem temple, rendering a physical temple useless.¹⁰ Additionally, after Jesus' ascension, Paul and Peter both use language that indicates views that either the collective, worshipping community or the individual, physical bodies of disciples are the temple of God.¹¹

Regarding John's Apocalypse, these same traditions argue that the references to the temple in the Book of Revelation should similarly follow in the same figurative pattern as previous books. Unlike post-70 C.E. Judaism, however, these developments in understanding the temple as figurative are potentially not in direct response to its destruction since they might predate the temple destruction. The temple is still standing at the inception of the interpretative traditions of the gospels and most other NT documents and thus, a figurative understanding relates to a divergence in theology or ideology undeterred by the destruction of the Jewish temple.¹² This is not to say John wrote Revelation prior to 70 C.E. but one wonders, rather,

¹⁰ For an excellent treatment of this view, see Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2001). The book of Hebrews figures prominently in this view as well, with debate centering on passages like Hebrews 3:9, 4:14-5:10, 6:19-20, 7:11-10:39 (specifically 9:11).

¹¹ Paul's clearest language on this appears in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 6:19. There is strong support for dating this letter in the mid 50's C.E., well before the fall of the temple in 70 C.E., so Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Occasion of the Epistle: Dates, Reports, Letters, and Integrity," in *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 29-32. As far as Peter is concerned, 1 Peter 2:5 sums up his similar tenets. Peter's writings, like Paul, are before 70 CE Many date 1 Peter prior to 64-65 C.E., although this is by no means indisputable, as demonstrated by J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), lvii-lxi. It is possible that because of Jesus' ascension and absence, the disciples were uncertain about how to interpret Jesus' statements about himself as the temple, for just as Israel lost its physical temple, now the disciples had lost theirs, Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 7. This appears to be contrary to Oskar Skarsaune who argues that during its first forty years Christianity existed in the context of functioning Jewish temple, yet "most of Christian literature and all of rabbinic literature come from a time when there was no temple," Oscar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 15.

¹² This is a major difference between understanding non-literal views of the temple in Christianity and post-temple Judaism. Christianity is already seeking to replace the role of the temple prior to its destruction, while Jews, for the most part, made no such attempts until after 70 C.E. However, with regard to at least one gospel, that of John, there is substantial disagreement as to the date, purpose, and setting of the gospel and its relationship to the destruction of the temple, so Andreas Kostenberger, "The Destruction of the Second Temple and the Composition of the Fourth Gospel," *Trinity Journal* n.s. 26, (2005). It is important to note here that the Qumran community, which did not recognize the validity of the Jerusalem temple or its priesthood, may have had similar views to Paul and Peter in that the believing community serves as the temple.

whether a figurative understanding of the temple in Christianity might predate the temple's destruction.

On the other hand, converse to the above traditions, those who argue that the Book of Revelation writes of a literal temple constitute a vocal minority.¹³ Among these voices, for example, is Dispensational Premillennialism. A form of futurism,¹⁴ it purports a hermeneutic of strict literalism and eschews all efforts to understand the temple, especially in John's Apocalypse, as anything but a rebuilt, third Jewish temple, from which Christ will reign during a thousand-year period before the end of the world and in which worshippers reconstitute animal sacrifices.¹⁵

One of the loci contributing to these divergent traditions revolves around how to understand the references to the temple found in the Apocalypse of John. John uses forms of the Greek noun *ναός*, translated temple or sanctuary, fifteen times in thirteen verses, spread among seven chapters.¹⁶ Overwhelmingly, these passages speak of the temple of God. Similarly, *σκηνή*, the noun translated tent, or tabernacle, appears three times, all referring to the dwelling place or presence of God.¹⁷ Add to these occurrences John's references to the altar,¹⁸ the lampstands,¹⁹

¹³ Arguably, this may be an instance where understanding the reader response criticism of George Dillon is helpful. He argues that some readers, based on personality, are more prone to reading and interpreting literally. This is his Character-Action-Moral reader, George L. Dillon, "Styles of Reading," *Poetics Today* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1982).

¹⁴ The dangers and irresponsibility of too broadly categorizing Christian streams into ecumenical and evangelical (futurists) are seen in Irving H. Buchen, "Messianic Futurism: The Christian Example," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 10, (1977). Not all of those identifying themselves as evangelical are futurists, see G.K. Beale for instance and not all of those who call themselves ecumenical follow the agenda Buchen seems to set out.

¹⁵ Stephen R. Spencer, *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley, 3 vols., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill, 1999-2003), s.v. "Dispensationalism." One should note here that not all futurists use a literalist hermeneutic.

¹⁶ See 3:12, 7:15, 11:1, 11:2, 11:19, 14:15, 14:17, 15:5, 15:6, 15:8, 16:1, 16:17, and 21:22. *ἱερόν*, another typical noun for temple, does not appear.

¹⁷ See 13:6, 15:5, 21:3, as well as the two verbal forms of *σκηνώω*, dwelling, in 7:15 and 21:3.

¹⁸ *θυσιαστήριον* is in 8:3, 11:1. Presumably, this is the golden altar of incense as in LXX Exod. 27:1.

¹⁹ Forms of lampstand appear in 1:12, 1:13, 1:20, and 2:1. LXX 25:31 is the likely OT referent.

bowls,²⁰ and the Ark of the Covenant,²¹ and the Book of Revelation presents a communication replete with the temple.²² Is one to understand these references literally, as in reference to the actual, physical objects they may represent, or are these references figurative, making use of metaphor, symbol, or other forms of figurative language? These questions form the basis for this dissertation and it presumes from the outset, contrary to many of the traditions noted above, that the answers to these questions are not necessarily or exclusively found in a specific Christian hermeneutic regarding Revelation, but rather in the natural functions of language.²³

One proposes here that a linguistic theory of metaphor, when applied to one part of Revelation's temple image, that of the lampstands, may provide a better path for understanding John's temple language overall than a specific theological tradition.

That said, one also notes later in the dissertation that language and context, including ancient spiritual and hermeneutical traditions, play an interdependent role with one another. However, too often in interpreting Revelation, modern tradition trumps the logic of language, leading to confusion.²⁴ Therefore, a discussion of language use, specifically linguistic metaphors, rather than modern theological categories, is foundational in this dissertation for understanding the lampstands in Revelation, and, potentially by extension, the temple.

²⁰ See 5:8, 15:7, 16:1, 17:1, and 21:9. The bowls probably refer to the golden bowls of Exod. 38:23-26 and Num. 4:14.

²¹ The NT mentions the Ark of the Covenant only twice, here in Rev. 11:19, and in Heb. 9:4.

²² This does not include references to ideas within the temple milieu such as priests and liturgy.

²³ Contrary to popular assertions in Christianity that only Christians can understand the Bible, one argues here that intellectual comprehension of the Bible's language is entirely distinct from one's spiritual reception of this language. One may intellectually comprehend the Bible and its teachings and stories quite well without believing in them. For uncritical claims that "unbelievers" cannot understand the Bible, see for instance Dan Popp, "Why disbelievers can't understand the Bible" <http://www.renewamerica.com/columns/popp/100810> (accessed 31 July 2014).

²⁴ Kistemaker's introduction illustrates a typical approach to Revelation commentaries, particularly among protestant commentators. Here he introduces four modes of interpretation that people use when studying Revelation, Preterist, Historicist, Futurist, Idealist, Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*. New Testament Commentary, vol. 20 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001), 38-44. Johnson quite consciously places these positions later in his commentary, see his reasoning in Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2001), 5.

Since one does recognize the interdependent role of spiritual and theological traditions in interpreting biblical texts, while also maintaining that a linguistic methodology can be the primary vehicle for informing these traditions, one believes it is necessary to clarify certain issues when discussing the language, history, and cultic place of the temple in the New Testament and Christianity.

First, there is a different role for the Second temple in the lives of Jewish believers in Jesus and the lives of Gentile Christians,²⁵ particularly those outside of Palestine, during the New Testament period. This may play a role in the interdependent nature of this linguistic study.

Second, there is a difference in the role between the Second Jewish temple in Jerusalem, generally dating “from the return from Exile to the destruction of Herod’s temple,”²⁶ and either a third, or future, eschatological temple,²⁷ although the issues surrounding Christian roles with each is similar.²⁸ As this study addresses how the Book of Revelation writes of the lampstands, which are an integral part of the temple, it is necessary to distinguish these dichotomies in order

²⁵ Additionally, one uses the phrase, “Jewish believers in Jesus,” following Oscar Skarsaune, “Jewish Believers in Jesus in Antiquity -- Problems of Definition, Method, and Sources,” in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 3. One is also aware of the ongoing and multifaceted debate regarding the meaning of the term “Jewish Christian” as well as the adjoining contentions regarding the “parting of the ways,” or not, between Judaism and Christianity. When “Jewish Christian” appears in this text, it follows the same definition of “Jewish believers in Jesus” and is interchangeable. That is, it refers to those of Jewish decent by birth or converts to Judaism, who followed Jesus as Messiah. For a discussion of the use of the term “Jewish Christian,” see Joel Marcus, “Jewish Christianity,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 87-102. The name, “Gentile Christian,” does presuppose a Jewish perspective, since Gentiles probably didn’t call themselves Gentiles; the term refers to believers in Jesus as Messiah who were not born into or converted to Judaism, see Margaret M. Mitchell, “Gentile Christianity,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁶ Francis Schmidt, *How the Temple Thinks: Identity and Social Cohension in Ancient Judaism*. (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 270.

²⁷ A third temple does not necessarily imply an eschatological temple, although many writings indicate such, as Sizer demonstrates, Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 171.

²⁸ As above, this is because many, particularly Zionists, believe the third temple and the eschatological temple are the same. One could hold that even if someone builds a third temple in Jerusalem it does not portend eschatological consummation. This, as Sizer explains, appears to be Scofield’s position as indicated in the footnotes of the Scofield Bible on Haggai 2:9, *ibid.*, 174.

to understand and interact with the nuances in extant interpretive Christian communities; these differences conceivably begin the trajectories of later interpretative traditions.²⁹

Beginning first with the differing role of the Second Temple for Gentile and Jewish Christians, there seems to be some antinomy in the first century that may underlie future hermeneutical approaches or traditions within Christianity. While there is little to no evidence of any real Gentile Christian participation in the temple, it does appear that the text of Acts indicates that in the earliest days of Christianity, some Jewish believers in Jesus, residing in Jerusalem, more particularly the apostles, continued to participate in some way in the life of the temple.³⁰ One then wonders if very early in its history, a dichotomy of attitude and practices existed within Christianity regarding the temple.

With respect to the Christians of Jewish origin, certain of Acts' references indicate this temple participation was for persuading other Jews concerning the resurrection of Jesus,³¹ although one cannot frame all the passages in this light. Apparently, these Jewish Christians did not consider their presence in the temple, while even possibly believing it obsolete or diminished in its role, to be contradictory.³² Of note, are questions as to what extent these Jewish believers in

²⁹ Here one focuses on Christian attitudes towards the temple. However, one must note that Christians alone likely did not decide their attitude towards the temple. An equally valid approach regarding Jewish exclusion of Christians from the temple, and later the synagogue and Jewish community is important.

³⁰ Acts 2:46, 3:1ff, 5:20-42, 21:26, 22:17, 24:12-18.

³¹ Acts 5:20.

³² The relationship between Judaism and early Christianity is one of great debate and significance, though not central to the tenets of this work. When they became distinct and identifiable from each other is part of this debate. One agrees with Becker and Reed who write, "No longer can scholars assume that there was a single historical moment after which the texts, beliefs, and practices of Jews became irrelevant to those of their Christian contemporaries—nor the converse," Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Paperback ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), xi. One also agrees with Alexander when he writes, "It is simplistic to look for a decisive *moment* in the parting of the ways, a crucial doctrine or event that caused the final rupture. There was no sudden break between Christianity and Judaism, but rather an ever-widening rift," Philip S. Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Jews and Christians: the parting of the ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 3. An exact reconstruction of this complex relationship is likely impossible.

Jesus participated in liturgy or sacrifice,³³ and, even had the temple remained, would they have continued visiting the temple indefinitely?

It is this last point that makes studying the role of the temple in Christianity so fascinating. The absence of a physical temple led both Gentile and Jewish Christians throughout the following centuries to reflect seriously on whether a physical temple is necessary to the Christian faith. This reflection stems from New Testament passages that suggest the temple is a type, metaphor, or symbol, rendering the physical temple a shadow of something spiritually greater.

While the attitudes of Jewish Christians toward the Second Temple may have been ambivalent or even favorable in certain early texts of Acts as one briefly mentions above, Luke's initial portrayal of this favor, perhaps intentionally so, ends with a crowd of Jews dragging Paul from the temple in Acts 21:30 and shutting its doors. Polhill correctly notes that this is the last

³³ Acts 3:1 for example, records that Peter and John were going to the temple at the time of prayer, but not that they prayed. However, in making his defense against the Jews in Acts 22:17, Paul seems to indicate that within short time of his baptism, he was present in the temple for prayer. More particularly, Acts 21:20 and its surrounding narrative regarding Paul's purification and offering in the temple, is an important passage in such a discussion. Paul's relationship to and practices regarding the Mosaic Law consume volumes. For brief introductions, see Gregory R. Perry, "Paul in Acts and the Law in the Prophets," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 31, (2009); Craig S. Keener, "One New Temple in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22; Acts 21:27-29; Mark 11:17; John 4:20-24)," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12, no. 1 (2009). A more thorough investigations is Ed P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983). Specific texts regarding Paul and the temple are less numerous. Also, notably, if one takes Acts' references at face value, they may point to an early presence of Christianity in Egypt, see Acts 2:10, 8:26-40, 18:24. It would be interesting to know whether Jewish Christians, or Jewish believers in Jesus, participated in worship or were present at the Jewish temple of Onias in Leontopolis, which is in the Nome of Heliopolis. Rosenberg states the Romans destroyed this temple in 73 AD under the order of Vespasian. He states that despite apparent claims, no one has found its ruins, so Stephen Rosenberg, "Two Jewish Temples in Antiquity in Egypt," *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society 2001-2002* 19-20, (2001). However Taylor, following Josephus' account, notes that the temple was not destroyed, but shuttered, Joan E. Taylor, "A Second Temple in Egypt: the Evidence for the Zadokite Temple of Onias," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 29, no. 3 (1998): 299. Josephus indicates that several temples existed in Egypt beyond the one at Leontopolis, though he does not believe they are legitimate. Feldman and Reinhold have helpfully organized Josephus' statements on Leontopolis in Louis H. Feldman and Meyer Reinhold, eds., *Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 49-51.

scene in the Acts narrative that takes place at the temple, though one must be careful to recognize that while it is the last scene at the temple it is not the last scene about the temple.³⁴

At the heart of Paul's conflict in the account of Acts 21 above is the belief that Paul defiled the temple by bringing a foreigner into the inner courts.³⁵ Luke specifically records that some of the Jews from Asia presumed that Paul brought Trophimus the Ephesian into the temple, in violation of the well-known prohibition against bringing foreigners into the temple.³⁶

³⁴ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, ed. David S. Dockery, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 453.

³⁵ The issue of access, or inclusion and exclusion, regarding the temple is surely a critical one in any discussion of Christian views of temple, whether physical or figurative, see Stephen R. Llewelyn and Dionysia Van Beek, "Reading the Temple Warning as a Greek Visitor," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 42, (2011). Bickerman states that Jewish temple exclusion was solely on the basis of whether or not one was a foreigner and not on whether or not they had pure hearts and hands; he further argues that while the exclusion of the stranger was common in Greek temples as well, it was rarely enforced in the time of Augustus, Elias. J. Bickerman, "The Warning Inscriptions of Herod's Temple," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 37, no. 4 (April 1947): 390-391.

³⁶ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 5.194, records that as one approached the "second court of the temple," they were met by an ornate "stone balustrade, three cubits high," and which, at intervals, contained warning slabs or tablets; the warning was in "Ἑλληνικοῖς αἱ δὲ Ῥωμαϊκοῖς γράμμασιν," that is, Greek and Latin letters or writing, roughly stating that, "μηδένα ἀλλόφυλον ἐντὸς τοῦ ἁγίου παριέναι," "no foreigner was permitted to enter the holy place," see Henry St. John Thackeray, *Josephus with an English Translation*. 9 vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 3 (London; Cambridge: William Heinemann, LTD; Harvard University Press, 1961), 258-259. Similarly, in *Wars of the Jews* 6.125, Josephus records that Titus speaks to John of Giscala, accusing him of hypocritically defiling the temple with the blood of foreigners, even though the Romans had allowed them to place warning slabs engraved in, "γράμμασιν Ἑλληνικοῖς καὶ ἡμετέροις κεχαραγμέναις," that is, in "Greek characters and in our own," and further allowed them to put to death violators, even Romans, *ibid.*, 412-413. One presumes Titus means Latin when he speaks of "our own letters. However, in his translation, Whiston records not "our own letters," but "your own letters," which would mean the Hebrew or Aramaic of the Jews and not the Latin of the Romans, see Flavius Josephus, "Wars of the Jews," in *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 6.125. According to Bickerman, two tablets containing this temple warning in Greek are extant, though Llewelyn and van Beek note that the second copy is only fragmentary, see Bickerman, "The Warning Inscriptions of Herod's Temple," 387; Llewelyn and Van Beek, "Reading the Temple Warning as a Greek Visitor," 2. Bickerman helpfully records the contents of the complete tablet as reading, Μηθένα ἀλλογενῆ εἰσπορεύεσθαι ἐντὸς τοῦ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τρυφάκτου καὶ περιβόλου. Ὃς δ' ἂν ληφθῇ, ἑαυτῷ αἴτιος ἔσται διὰ τὸ ἐξακολουθεῖν θάνατον. Similarly, Evans records these words and notes they were painted in red, against an off-white limestone background, Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Ossuaries," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 13, no. 1 (2003): 23. An almost identical statement exists, regarding the use of Greek and Latin letters, in some variant texts of Luke 23:37-38 concerning the sign above the head of Jesus on the cross. The sign is in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew as Nestle and Aland note the following support for the variant in their apparatus, e. a. γραμμασιν ἑλληνικοῖς καὶ (- Σ^* .^{2b} D) ρωμαϊκοῖς καὶ (- Σ^* .^{2b} D) εβραϊκοῖς Σ^* .^{2b} A C³ D K N Q W Γ Δ Θ \mathfrak{f}^1 565. 579^C. 700. 892. 1424. (Ψ \mathfrak{f}^{43} 33. 2542. *l* 844) Θ \mathfrak{L} lat sy^(p).^h (bo^{pt}), Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce Metzger, Universität Münster, and Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28 ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 284.

Bickerman posits that the prohibition against foreigners is due to Exodus 19:6, "but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation."³⁷ In this way, the entire Jewish nation is a priestly caste, which includes proselytes, but necessarily excludes non-proselyte foreigners.

As an aside, if Bickerman is correct, John's Apocalypse may contribute to an attitude of separation by using the covenantal claims of Exodus 19:6 with respect to his own readers rather than the Jewish nation. In Rev. 1:5b-6, John writes in doxology, "To Him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving His God and Father ..."

Not only are the words important, but the location of this designation in the Apocalypse is significant. Revelation 1:4-8 forms at least a part of the epistolary opening, or more specifically, the epistolary prescript of John's Apocalypse.³⁸ The purpose of epistolary openings, standard in nearly all Greco-Roman letterforms, is "establishing or enhancing personal contact with the letter recipient."³⁹

The focal point of this relationship is 1:5b-6, where John identifies himself and his readers as those whom Jesus Christ loves and frees from sin, further stating that he has "made us to be a kingdom and priests serving his God and Father..." The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders use a similar expression in their hymn before the lamb in 5:9-10.

This form of self-identification is significant as John's use of the words "kingdom and priests" is a literary appeal to the tradition of Exodus 19:5-6,⁴⁰ and is part of a key transition in

³⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations are from *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989). This quotation is not the version Bickerman uses. He does not cite which version he quotes and the exact wording seems to indicate his own eclectic translation, Bickerman, "The Warning Inscriptions of Herod's Temple," 391.

³⁸ For more on the epistolary possibilities of Revelation, see the genre discussion below.

³⁹ Jeffrey A.D. Wiema, s.v. "Letters, Greco-Roman." ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000).

⁴⁰ The Septuagint, hereafter LXX, records the anarthrous attributive βασιλειον ιεράτευμα, a kingly or royal priesthood. Exodus 19:5-6 poetically parallels ἔσεσθέ μοι λαὸς περιούσιος, you will be my treasured possession

the opening of chapter 1. Prior to 1:5b-6, discourse is in the third and second person, respectively.⁴¹ However, in 1:5b-6, the discourse shifts to the first person; John offers doxology to him "who loves us and freed us" from "our sins"⁴² and "made us" to be a kingdom and priests.⁴³ As part of the epistolary opening, John expectedly creates a sense of identification with the audience; the first-person plural is inclusive language. However, more broadly, the "us" of 1:5 intends to equate the seven churches in Asia with the much broader "saints from every tribe and language and people and nation," in 5:10.

Furthermore, it appears that John's allusion to Exodus 19:5-6 seeks to connect the seven churches in Asia and the group of saints in 5:10 with the covenantal claims of Exodus.⁴⁴ Exactly

(people), and ἔσεσθέ μοι βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, you will be my royal priesthood (contra NRSV's priestly kingdom). No articles are necessary as the two clauses appear as predicates within parallel copulative sentences, thereby lending specificity to one another. The BHS records the noun construct, מְמַלְכֶת כֹּהֲנִים, a kingdom of priests. John's use of βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς, resembles the LXX. The UBS addition of a comma between the two words can be translated, "He has made us to be a kingdom; priests to God," which equates the two. 1 Pet. 2:5 records a holy priesthood, perhaps combining kingdom of priests and a holy nation from Exod. 19:6. 4Q491 M a 16:3 reflects the same Hebrew construct form of Exod. 19:6, as does Exod. 23:22. Philo writes of a τῆς βασιλείου καὶ ἱερωμένης φυλῆς, the chiefs and priestly tribe, whom he identifies as those of Judah and Levi, see Philo, "On Flight and Finding," in *The Works of Philo: Greek Text with Morphology* ed. Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth, and Roald Skarsten (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005), line 74, p. 327. One wonders whether John would make the same association.

⁴¹ The third person αὐτῷ, and αὐτοῦ, him and of him, respectively, appear in 1:1 regarding Jesus. The third person verbs in 1:2, ἐμαρτύρησεν, he testified, and εἶδεν, he saw, refer to John. The second person ὑμῖν, to you, in 1:4 has its antecedent in the seven churches. Finally, the third person αὐτοῦ, of him, in 1:4, refers to Jesus. This pronoun pattern parallels 5:10 where the four living creatures and twenty-four elders use the third person αὐτοῦς, "... you have made them to be a kingdom and priests..." The pronoun in 5:10 refers to the third person plural, "saints from every tribe and language and people and nation."

⁴² Revelation 1:5 states that Christ "freed us from our sins." It uses λύσαντι, the one who loosed, with τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, sins, and it appears this was an uncommon way of speaking of forgiveness. Similar constructions only appear in LXX Job 42:9, Sir. 28:2, Isa. 40:2.

⁴³ John uses the direct object ἡμᾶς, us, in each of the three cited instances and the possessive ἡμῶν, our, with sins. The NT often associates the work of Christ with the genitive τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, our sins. 1 Cor. 15:3 states that Christ died for our sins; Gal. 1:4 records that Christ gave himself for our sins; 1 John 2:2, and 4:10 say Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Similarly, one finds the accusative τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, our sins, in Luke 11:4 where Christ forgives our sins, and in 1 Pet. 2:24 where Christ bore our sins.

⁴⁴ As Exodus 19:5-6 is the only place in the OT in which the words kingdom of priests, or royal priesthood appear, it is likely that any pietistic Jew or Jewish Christian would imagine the historical tradition undergirding such an allusion. One argues this from the perspective of Greek speaking Jews and Jewish Christians, particularly those of the Diaspora residing in the seven churches to which John writes, since the Hebrew, כֹּהֵן, priests, does not derive from, מִקְדָּשׁ, temple

what John intends by this connection is not immediately evident as there are different literary and interpretative traditions based on Exodus 19:5-6.⁴⁵

That John claims the covenantal promise of Exodus 19:5-6, reflects what appears to be a normative assertion within the New Testament: the followers of Christ are the true Israel and thus the true descendants of Abraham and recipients of God's promises. The LXX of Ex. 19:5 includes a very tentative conditional clause. The protasis states, "if you obey my voice and keep my covenant," and is followed by the apodosis "you shall be my treasured possession..."⁴⁶ The *ἐάν*, if, together with the aorist subjunctive *ἀκούσητε*, you might hear or obey, indicate that Israel is only God's treasured possession relative to their obedience regarding God's covenant.⁴⁷ Contextually, then, verse 6 is a part of the apodosis of verse 5. In this manner, John equates God's treasured possession, kingdom, and priests. Israel can only be God's kingdom and priests, or royal priesthood, if they keep the covenant.

The NT asserts that historical Israel, or at least large portions of it, failed in the condition set forth above. Thus, the NT posits either a replacement of Israel with the church, or an extension of Israel to the church, containing Jews and Gentiles, both possessing God's promises from the OT. Therefore, those among Israel who fail to obey God's covenant are not God's treasured possession, and those among the Gentiles who obey God's covenant are his treasured possession.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ While Lumpkin, noted above, sees Revelation 1:5-6 within the context of the covenant of Exodus 19:5-6, between God and Israel, notably in a Hittite suzerain-vassal treaty, he overstates covenant typology for Revelation.

⁴⁶ The nominative *λαὸς παριούσιος*, treasured possession, appears here and in 23:22. Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, and 26:18 contain the exact wording, only in accusative form; so, Jubilees 2.20, Apostolic Constitutions 7.26 in Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers, 1 Clement 64.1, and Titus 2:14.

⁴⁷ For the logical and semantic categories of conditional clauses, see Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999), 254ff.

⁴⁸ Campbell contains a helpful introduction to the various ways in which Paul interprets Israel literally and metaphorically, William S. Campbell, s.v. "Israel." ed. Ralph P. Martin Gerald F. Hawthorne, Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993). For Elliot's interpretive

Similarly, John claims the promise of Exodus 19:5-6; that his audience is God's treasured possession. The makarism in Rev. 1:3 strengthens this view.⁴⁹ John's exhortation that blessing is upon those hearing, οἱ ἀκούοντες, and keeping, τηροῦντες, the word, echoes the hearing, ἀκούσῃτε, and keeping, φυλάξῃτε, of the covenant in Ex. 19:5.⁵⁰

The language of both Exodus and Revelation indicates the role of this kingdom of priests is to serve God.⁵¹ God and his kingdom of priests enjoy a special relationship for God's benefit.⁵² John's use of the language of Ex. 19 potentially indicates his assertion that the promise of Ex. 19:6 finds fulfillment not in Israel, but rather in the audience of the Apocalypse. In the context of Christian attitudes to the temple, this designation of John to his audience may explain their reticence to rebuilding the temple because of the formerly exclusionary temple warning as it relates to Exodus 19:5-6.

possibilities in the gospel narratives, see Mark Elliot, s.v. "Israel." ed. Scot McKnight Joel B. Green, I. Howard Marshall, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

⁴⁹ Although addressing Matthew's makarisms rather than Revelation's, Hanson argues convincingly for translating makarisms as, "O How Honorable!" rather than "blessed is." Formal blessings are significantly different from the positive social challenges to honor that one finds in makarisms. Scholars understand Revelation contains seven makarisms: Rev. 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, and 22:14. What many do not often note is that Matthew balances the makarisms by seven reproaches, represented in the Greek as οὐαί, "O How Shameful!" See Rev 8:13, 9:12, 11:14, 12:12, 18:10, 18:16, and 18:19, Kenneth C. Hanson, "How Honorable! How Shameful! A Cultural Analysis of Matthew's Makarisms and Reproaches," in *Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible*, ed. Victor Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, Semeia (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1995), 81-111. Fiorenza calls the seven blessings of Revelation macarisms, indicating the same idea, though with a different spelling, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Composition and Structure of the Book of Revelation," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 39, (1977): 351. She later changes the word macarism to blessing in a revision and republication of the same article under Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*. Second ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 164.

⁵⁰ Louw and Nida place φυλάσσω and τηρέω in the same semantic domain, Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:467.

⁵¹ The NRSV implies the verb "serving."

⁵² The BHS records God as promising, "You shall be my (to me) treasured possession ... you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." The Hebrew, יְהוָה, to me, my, or for me, acts as the direct object. The grammar might reflect a special, intimate relationship later indicated by the Greek Dative. The LXX here uses μοι, to me. As a Dative of indirect object, the LXX μοι is one of advantage, that is, the relationship exists to the advantage or benefit of God. John maintains this emphasis in Rev 1:6 with τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, where the priests are, "to his God and Father," with God and Father acting as Datives of advantage.

In coming back to Paul and the book of Acts, an additional six scenes about the temple occur in the remaining Acts narrative, although all of them inextricably link to Acts 21:30. Each residual account is a variation of Paul defending himself against the charges the Jews level against him in the 21:30 account.⁵³ As the last scene at the temple in Acts, Polhill further wonders, “Is this symbolic that with this final refusal of God’s messenger the temple was forever closed to God’s purposes?”⁵⁴ If so, this account may be the catalyst for generations of Christian traditions refusing to rebuild the temple, especially since many of those Christians would have been Gentiles and not converts to Judaism.⁵⁵

Whether Acts intends it, after the destruction of the Second Temple, it appears that some Christian opposition, presumably, but not necessarily Gentile, arises or crystalizes towards the idea of rebuilding another Jewish temple in Jerusalem. It may be that these attitudes toward the temple are rooted in earlier biblical traditions, potentially the one inspired by the Acts 21:30 events above, though it is difficult to prove with any certainty.⁵⁶

While it is difficult to assess Christian attitudes towards the temple in the early centuries of the church, by the time of the 4th century, it is possible to surmise a general feeling of opposition as one notes above. However, by this time, there is no way to distinguish Jewish

⁵³ See Acts 22:17, 24:6, 24:12, 24:18, 25:8, and 26:21.

⁵⁴ Polhill, *Acts*, 453.

⁵⁵ This is another of the questions regarding the parting of the ways between Jews and Gentiles. Did Jews view Gentile converts to Christianity as proselytes to a Jewish sect or to something altogether different? If the view were that Christianity was a non-Jewish religion early on, then Gentiles would have experienced exclusion from the temple from the outset. Also, with respect to dissatisfaction with the earthly temple, Himmelfarb notes this is a powerful motivation for interest in heavenly temples, Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15.

⁵⁶ Although one predicates the arguments here on divergent traditions, that is, theological and religious differences, the role of other influences is important as well. For instance, it is possible that the *Fiscus Judaicus* played a significant role in the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity, as well as their attitudes towards the temple. For more on the *Fiscus Judaicus* in this context, see Marius Heemstra, *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways*. (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Martin Goodman, "Nerva, the Fiscus Judaicus and Jewish Identity," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 79, (1989); Michael S. Ginsburg, "Fiscus Judaicus," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 21, no. 3 (Jan 1931).

Christian from Gentile Christian attitudes or experiences, in the same way one can distinguish them in the Book of Acts.

The surviving writings and history of Christians, although varied in belief and practice, do not seem to divide between Jewish and Gentile traditions. What history and tradition that does survive seems to follow a similar pattern, which is one of hostility to a rebuilt temple.⁵⁷

Interestingly, it is the writings of the Roman Emperor Julian and specifically the Christian response to his attempt to rebuild the Jerusalem temple in 363 CE that illustrates some of the earliest, non-biblical accounts of the hostility of Christians to the idea of temples in general and, by extension, the Jewish temple.

According to Wright, on February 4, 362 CE Julian ordered the restoration of all temples in his empire.⁵⁸ This edict is surely preparatory to his subsequent promise to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and its temple as noted in his *To the Community of the Jews*, in late 362 or early 363 CE⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Fredriksen and Irshai, indicate the opposition to the temple is a part of a larger anti-Judaism polemic within Christianity. While they may be correct and parts of the article largely substantiate anti-Jewish policies of the Roman Emperors, their work is, in places, quite tendentious and selective, freely citing limited sources favoring their opinion, while dismissing similarly limited sources against their position as quite rare. The irony of the article is that among the sources cited for early anti-Jewish bigotry are early Christian church fathers who are claiming that the Jews are carrying out systematic persecution and murder against Christians. The authors do not fairly assess whether the claims are true, valid, or plausible, quickly dismissing such potential actions by the Jews as anti-Christian polemic not persecution. They go on to demonstrate further their own (conscious or sub-conscious) bias when they state that the loss of religious pluralism in the late Roman Empire due to Christianity is an “unhappy hallmark.” For scholars of such renown, the article strikes an odd tone, failing, in one’s opinion, to establish clearly a link between an earlier era of Christianity and the Roman policies of the 4th century, see Paula Fredriksen and Oded Irshai, “Christian Anti-Judaism: Polemics and Policies,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁵⁸ Wilmer Cave Wright, *The Works of the Emperor Julian*. ed. E. Capps, T.E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, vol. III (London; New York: William Heinemann; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1923), xvii.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 177-181. One believes that Wright goes too far in stating that when Julian issues this edict, “He may almost be called a Zionist,” ibid., xxi. The term appears a bit anachronistic here and, further, it is impossible to read Julian’s many other letters and come to this conclusion. He is firmly committed to the traditional gods and cult of Rome, though tolerating religious groups such as Jews and Galileans (Christians).

In the intervening time, which Wright indicates is after June 17, 362 CE, Julian, in his *Rescript on Christian Teachers*, alludes to the Galileans,⁶⁰ or Christians, and mocks and remonstrates them because they teach that people should refrain from temple worship;⁶¹ it is a situation that Julian obviously loathes.

If this situation is a historically accurate description, then conflict is inevitable. Julian wishes for people to restore the temples of the empire and the Christians are teaching that members of its community should abstain from temple worship. While Julian's edict regarding the rebuilding of temples surely includes the Jerusalem temple, it is not necessarily clear in the above circumstances that Christian opposition to temples extends beyond the Hellenic and pagan context to Jerusalem.

However, this opposition is much clearer as the Jews of Jerusalem attempt to carry out Julian's edict early in 363. As Levenson writes, several ancient sources record that an earthquake devastated Palestine and Syria in May of 363 and that subsequent fires in Jerusalem prevented the efforts of the Jews to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.⁶² The Christian sources that record and

⁶⁰ Adler records that Julian has no other name for Christians other than Galileans, Michael Adler, "The Emperor Julian and the Jews," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 5, no. 4 (July 1893): 597.

⁶¹ Wright, *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, 117-121. Julian writes that Christians are, οἷς πεισθέντες ἱερῶν ὑμεῖς ἀπέχεσθαι νομοθετεῖτε, the ones persuading you to enact laws abstaining from temples. It appears by his use of νομοθετεῖτε, "to enact laws," Julian believes this is more than just an isolated opinion, but rather a common practice. Synchronously, Demosthenes' *Against Dionysodorus* uses νομοθετεῖτε in terms of fixing or enacting laws, in this case a lawsuit brought in an Athenian court against Dionysodorus whereby the outcome will be seen as enacting a law that not only affects the case at hand, but one that is binding on the entire port of Athens, see Demosthenes, *Demosthenes with An English Translation by Norman W. DeWitt and Norman J. DeWitt*, (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, William Heinemann Ltd., 1949). <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Dem.+56+48&fromdoc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0080> (accessed 17 April 2015). Additionally, in his letter to Hecebolius, which Wright dates to late 362 or early 363, Julian also proclaims that he has treated the Galileans kindly so that they have not been treated violently or "been dragged into a temple or threatened into anything else of the sort against his own will," Wright, *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, 127.

⁶² David B. Levenson, "The Palestinian Earthquake of May 363 in Philostorgius, the Syriac Chronicon miscellaneum, and the Letter Attributed to Cyril on the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2013); David B. Levenson, "The Ancient and Medieval Sources for the Emperor Julian's Attempt to Rebuild the Jerusalem Temple," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 35, (2004). One should also note, as below, that Julian died during at the same time and this, as much as anything, likely played a substantial role in the

reflect on these events interpret them as divine fulfillment of promises that no one should attempt to rebuild the temple.⁶³

Also, of significance are the events and history of Jerusalem in general during this period. In the so-called Christianization of Jerusalem during the fourth century, instead of rebuilding a temple, Christians enshrined churches and venerated the places of Jesus' crucifixion and burial instead.⁶⁴ It seems that while some Christians deemed Jerusalem itself as a holy place,⁶⁵ they did not extend this attitude to the temple.⁶⁶

In summary, it appears that while early Jewish Christians may not have been opposed to the temple in the early New Testament era, there is no evidence of Gentile Christian participation

stoppage. According to Adler, Jewish history has looked quite favorably on Julian for his efforts to rebuild the temple, Adler, "The Emperor Julian and the Jews."

⁶³ That an earthquake took place in the region during this time, and that fire beset the temple project, appear to be matters of historical record. Ancient sources differ in their interpretation of these events. For instance, while Christians interpreted the event as divine will against the rebuilding of the temple, Levenson writes that Libanius, Julian's admirer, attributed it to a funeral oration for the emperor, Levenson, "The Palestinian Earthquake of May 363 in Philostorgius, the Syriac Chronicon miscellaneum, and the Letter Attributed to Cyril on the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple," 61. Regarding Bede's writing on the temple, O'Reilly attempts to indicate that this later 7th century church leader did not possess hostility towards the temple, writing, "This does not mean that the Jewish Temple is to be reviled; rather it is to be revered ..." Jennifer O'Reilly, "Introduction," in *Bede: On the Temple* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), xxi. What she does not indicate is that Bede writes regarding the first temple of Solomon, and says nothing about any prospects of rebuilding another temple in Jerusalem.

⁶⁴ Walker, for instance, demonstrates that Eusebius, bishop of Palestine, held no special place in his theology for Jerusalem and its temple, but rather looked towards the "heavenly" Jerusalem, Peter Walker, "Jerusalem in the Early Christian Centuries," in *Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God*, ed. P.W.L. Walker (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1992), 83-85.

⁶⁵ Though certainly not Eusebius, according to Walker, *ibid.* However, it may be that Eusebius' opposition was to the old Jerusalem, that which belonged to the Jews, and not to a rebuilt, "Christian" Jerusalem. In fact, Eusebius argues that the old Jerusalem lay in ruins because of its guilt and sin for the "murder of the Lord," but that Constantine's efforts to build a new city and a new church over the holy sepulcher, at a location opposite the old Jerusalem, may represent the "new" Jerusalem spoken of by the prophets, Eusebius of Caesaria, "The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine" in "Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1890), 529.

⁶⁶ Walker argues that Cyril, as opposed to Eusebius, is favorably disposed to Jerusalem, perhaps separating God's judgment of Jerusalem from that of the temple, Walker, "Jerusalem in the Early Christian Centuries," 86. However, see the note above on Eusebius' potential understanding of Jerusalem. Moreover, the putatively divergent views of Cyril and Eusebius regarding holy places is not unique as the idea of holy places is disputed among Christians in their era, so Robert Austin Markus, "How on Earth Could Places Become Holy?," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2, no. 3 (1994). Finally, one agrees here with Fredriksen and Irshai in their understanding in their view that Eusebius viewed the Church of Anastasis or the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as the new temple, meaning the old, Jewish temple, is unnecessary, Fredriksen and Irshai, "Christian Anti-Judaism: Polemics and Policies," 1009.

in the temple, and indeed, for a Gentile to enter the temple would bring death. Furthermore, though it is difficult to say whether they were Jews or Gentiles by origin, later Christians, even those dwelling in Jerusalem, developed hostility to the idea of rebuilding the temple. It seems plausible at least, that the exclusionary nature of the temple and the language of the New Testament contributed to this hostility. Such possibilities aid in recreating what may be the ancient context of understanding or coherence regarding Revelation's metaphors.

Regarding the difference between the Second Temple and a possible third or eschatological temple, modern Christianity and its many traditions generally follow the tradition that a physical, Jewish temple is unnecessary to Christianity, which may owe to the more Gentile nature of later Christianity.⁶⁷ However, though one does not advocate for this here, there are also those rarer modern Christian traditions, particularly of American descent, which may appeal to the early Acts tradition or follow a more Jewish Zionist tradition in favor of rebuilding the temple.⁶⁸

As discussed above, these divergent traditions ordinarily, though not exclusively, relate to how one interprets the temple language of the New Testament. The interpretation of this language appears to have been primarily theological, with divisions as to whether one believes the church of Jesus has replaced national Israel as the chosen people of God, or, as Jewish and Christian Zionists believe, a third, physical temple,⁶⁹ with reconstituted sacrifices is in view.

⁶⁷ This is not to say that one is anachronistically arguing that later traditions indicate the meaning of the first-century texts. Just that one wonders if these traditions emerged from a viable, competent reading of the first-century text.

⁶⁸ For a brief history of Jewish Zionism in the first two centuries CE, together with its efforts to restore Jerusalem and the temple, particularly under Hadrian, see John J. Gunther, "The Epistle of Barnabas and the Final Rebuilding of the Temple," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 7, no. 2 (1976).

⁶⁹ This nomenclature is difficult, since definitions of what this means or looks like vary. That such language generally refers to Jerusalem's temple, and not to others, indicates the political development and strength of Jerusalem over Egypt. The idea of reconstituted sacrifices is not always consistent with history in that evidence supports some sacrifices from time to time. That some religious activity continued on the temple mount after the destruction of Herod's temple, such as prayer, sacrifice, and worship in a synagogue, is outlined by Loewenberg, F. Meir Loewenberg, "Did Jews Abandon the Temple Mount?," *The Middle East Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (Summer 2013).

This last position posits that God still relates in a special, covenantal way to the people of Israel. God, as their argument goes, has not supplanted Israel with the church, but rather relates to each one in different ways. The theological distinction is significant, since those arguing for such a position teach that a third temple is a sign of the *eschaton*.⁷⁰

On the other hand, many ancient and modern Christians oppose the idea that a third physical, Jewish temple is of any significance to Christianity or its traditions of the *eschaton*, in large part because they believe the temple, in a metaphorical sense, still exists, albeit in spiritual fashion.⁷¹

Having broadly outlined the two basic traditions of interpretation, one reasserts that a closer study of the linguistic situation of Revelation, rather than a fixation on interpretative traditions, likely offers a more promising path.

1.1 Genre and Language Theory

A study of linguistic metaphors in Revelation, specifically its lampstands metaphors, begins with an understanding of genre, and the way in which authors structure language to accomplish their communicative purposes. Some genres, particularly poetic genres, use language differently.

The genre of Revelation undoubtedly influences the way in which one understands its language, specifically its metaphors and other figurative language, and its language contributes

⁷⁰ E.g. Harry A. Ironside, *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*. (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1946), 186-187. While Ladd is a historical premillennialist, and not a dispensationalist, he outlines the dispensational belief in the end-times temple, George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 150.

⁷¹ Choy has written a helpful, if introductory study of the temple metaphor among 4th and 5th century church writings demonstrating substantial theological traditions away from a physical temple, Renie S. Choy, "'Temple of the Living God': The Transformation of a Metaphor and Its Application in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Christianity" (M.A. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2007).

to an understanding of its genre. However, before delving into the complexity of the Apocalypse's various genres, it is necessary to articulate at least a brief taxonomy of language or the language of biblical texts into which an analysis of genre fits.

One begins with the supposition that language⁷² and the language of biblical texts⁷³ are, under the right conditions,⁷⁴ generally understandable, coherent,⁷⁵ and meaningful.⁷⁶ Written or

⁷² Wardhaugh defines language simply as, "what members of a particular society speak," understanding that societies may be plurilingual and also that language, by definition, must include a reference to society as the two realities are not independent of each other, Ronald Wardhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Fifth ed. (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 1.

⁷³ According to Halliday and Matthiessen, people (or individuals) produce a text "when people speak or write ... and text is what listeners and readers engage with and interpret." Furthermore, they assert that "text is a process of making meaning in context," Michael A.K. Halliday and Christian M.M. Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Fourth ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 3.

⁷⁴ Dooley and Levinsohn write of "prior knowledge and expectation, ... based on culture-specific experience," as shaping the way one understands a text, Robert A. Dooley and Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Analyzing Discourse: A Manual of Basic Concepts*. (Summer Institute of Linguistics and University of North Dakota, 1997), 10. This work assumes that understanding and coherence of an ancient translated text, read in a modern language and context, requires at least some basic knowledge and understanding of that specific ancient language, its culture, environment, etc. for coherence and understanding to be more likely. The less information one has, the more likely one may be to fail in coherence and understanding of the text. Brown, following Hirsch, writes that when seeking meaning in a biblical text, one must ask if there is "adequate coherence—a significant sense of fit—between the original meaning in its context and its recontextualization for another setting," Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 248.

⁷⁵ Dooley and Levinsohn, following Johnson and Laird, define coherence at the sentence level in the following way, "A sentence is said to be coherent if, for a certain hearer on a certain hearing/reading, he or she is able to fit its different elements into a single overall mental representation," Dooley and Levinsohn, *Analyzing Discourse: A Manual of Basic Concepts*, 11. When attempting to understand an ancient text in a dead language, this naturally raises questions of how one determines what is coherent when one does not naturally speak that language and no original speakers or readers remain, as well as the understanding that what was likely coherent in an ancient language may not be coherent in the same way or to the same degree, in translation. For more on disagreements and research regarding coherence and cohesion theories, consult Glenn Fulcher, "Cohesion and Coherence in Theory and Reading Research," *Journal of Research in Reading* 12, no. 2 (1989); Robert J. Tierney and James H. Mosenthal, *The Cohesion Concept's Relationship to the Coherence of Text* (Champaign, IL, Cambridge, MA: The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, October 1981); Dooley and Levinsohn, *Analyzing Discourse: A Manual of Basic Concepts*, 10-17.

⁷⁶ Thompson helpfully notes that meaning is not just propositional, that is, the content of the sentence. Rather, meaning also equates with the function of a sentence, the way in which an author expresses a sentence, and the choice of words used to express said sentence. For instance, he notes the difference in meaning between two sentences, which propositionally contain the same structural, syntactical elements, such as "colds last seven days on average," as opposed to, "Do colds last seven days on average?" They are propositionally equal, but do not have the same function and thus do not possess the same meaning, Geoff Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*. Third ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 2014), 5-8. This understanding of meaning appears consistent with Hirsch, as noted by Brown, that "Meaning ... is essentially the pattern of what an author intended to communicate, conveyed through the text's linguistic signs based on shareable conventions," Brown, *Scripture as Communication*, 38. Thompson, citing the earlier work of Michael Halliday from 1994, records that meaning and function are essentially equal, and thus summarizes that Halliday argues for three kinds of meaning or functions in language, "We use language to talk about our experience of the world ... we also use language to interact with other people ... we organize our messages in way that indicate how they fit in with the other message around them and with the

spoken, language is an interplay between variables such as words, sentences, discourses, contexts, and social structures, to name a few.⁷⁷ Determining how these variables interact and in what ways they function, is part of the interpretative task. As Runge writes, "...languages form a system, and meaning is tied to the operations within this system. The existence of a system implies that there are indeed discernable patterns of usage."⁷⁸

Runge's assertion, following others, that a system possesses discernable patterns of usage is critical to the thinking of this dissertation. Usage implies choice, conscious or subconscious, on the part of the author, and usage choice implies context.

The use of words like function and choice, as mentioned immediately above, is intentional here as this work is inclined to follow a more functional, rather than structural,

wider context in which we are talking or writing." He later clarifies these as three metafunctions: experiential, interpersonal, and textual, and still later on adds his own fourth metafunction, that of the logical, Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 28-30, 38. In their more recent 2014 revision, Halliday and Matthiessen write of two primary categories of "socio-semiotic activity" which undergirds language meaning: activities of doing and activities of meaning. The activities of meaning are broken down into a further eight categories, summarized as: expounding knowledge about the world, reporting particular phenomena, recreating any aspect of prototypically human life, sharing personal experiences and values, enabling some course of activity, recommending some course of activity, and exploring societal values and positions, Halliday and Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 35-37.

⁷⁷ Halliday and Matthiessen write of this interconnectedness as the compositional nature of language, which they call constituency. Constituency is the process whereby smaller units of language construct larger units of language. These constituents are further placed in a scale of rank, ordered, in English, as clause, phrase/group, word, morpheme, Halliday and Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 5. On another note, this interplay of language understands that communicative competence is not based just on grammatically technical sentences or discourses, but also considers social contexts, which is a preferred term to Chomsky's "speech situation," since communication is not merely an oral act. This competence, according to Hymes, particularly combined with other scholars' ideas of communicative choice, considers the possibilities, feasibilities, appropriateness, and actual performance of a communicative act. For more on Chomsky's "speech situation," communicative competence, and Hymes, see Gert Rickheit, Hans Strohner, and Constanze Vorwerg, "The Concept of Communicative Competence," in *The Handbook of Communicative Competence*, ed. Gert Rickheit and Hans Strohner (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008).

⁷⁸ Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2010), 4. This is contrary to Chomsky, as quoted by Thompson, when he writes, "language is not properly regarded as a system of communication. It is a system for expressing thought, something quite different," Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 6. Halliday and Matthiessen include a helpful distinction between language as a system and language as a text with respect to the concept of instantiation. They write that the system of language is its potential and that the text of language is where the potential is instantiated, Halliday and Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 27-28.

approach to language and grammar,⁷⁹ because a functional approach to language focuses not just on the structure of the grammar and sentence, but on patterns of usage and choice within a given context, which one believes is foundational to understanding metaphor.

With respect to the idea of choice, Thompson, in his lucid introduction to functional grammar, argues that, “speakers do not go round producing de-contextualized grammatically correct sentences; they have reasons for saying something and for saying it in the way they do.”⁸⁰ This means that John, in authoring the Book of Revelation, made conscious or subconscious decisions to produce his text in the way that he did because of a certain context.⁸¹ In this way, one understands that John uses his language in terms of both functional and structural choices.

One will also assert and transfer Thompson’s idea of interdependence in language and context with respect to Revelation. Thompson is careful to note that, while context often determines the way in which one speaks or writes, language is not just dependent on context.⁸² Rather, language and texts often contribute to creating contexts as well. In this way, he writes that speakers/authors and hearers/readers “construe” meaning through the interdependence and reflexivity of context and language.⁸³ In Revelation, one could argue that John not only produced

⁷⁹ This is not to say that structure is not important to function or meaning, quite the opposite. However, in following Thompson, one agrees that a strictly structural approach, such as the Transformational-Generative approach of Chomsky, views language “as an abstract set of generalized rules detached from any particular context of use,” Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 1. The importance of context in meaning is critical to a functional understanding of grammar and language.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 9.

⁸¹ Thompson states, “In order to identify meaning choices, we have to look outwards at context: what, in the kind of society we live in, do we typically need or want to say?” Ibid. Halliday and Matthiessen describe context as possessing three categories: field – what is going on in the situation, tenor – who is taking part in the situation, and mode – what role is being played by language and other semiotics in the situation, Halliday and Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 33.

⁸² Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 10.

⁸³ One broadly understands Thompson’s discussion of his specific example regarding the use of the word “construe” to mean that any text, written or spoken, simultaneously reflects and constructs context, *ibid.* For deeper study on this reflexivity note that, “Contrastive Discourse Analysis and Contrastive Pragmatics are two partially overlapping labels referring to contrastive research that goes beyond clause/sentence level to explore the (textual features of) language in use under the assumption that the relations between texts and contexts are mutually reflexive – texts not only reflect but shape their contexts,” Maria de los Angeles Gomez-Gonzalez and Susana M. Duval-Suarez, “On Contrastive Linguistics: Trends, Challenges, and Problems,” in *The Dynamics of Language Use*, ed. Christopher S.

a certain text based on context, but that the text exists inter-dependently with the context, and thus constructs its own or another context as well.

This is perhaps one of the greater values of the introductory discussion on temple traditions. One can speculate that John may be writing about temple in his apocalypse with respect to a context that is decentralizing and devaluing the physical temple structure so central to Judaism, while at the same time, his temple metaphors, including lampstands, may contribute, along with other New Testament writings, to a new and later context which understands the temple as metaphorical rather than literal or physical.

In summary, regarding these and other metaphors in the Book of Revelation, one will argue that John's use of metaphors is a choice he makes to transcend simple propositional assertion and instead takes the reader to another or different level of meaning. These metaphors both reflect the context of his writing and create a context in which one may understand his text.⁸⁴

Given this emphasis on functional grammar, one is careful to note, as one discusses elsewhere, that the approach here is not slavishly functional. As with Levinsohn, one values an eclectic approach, recognizing that a functional approach to language presupposes a structural one and that this theory is helpful to biblical studies. Yet one is also aware that no single theory of language or linguistics is exhaustive when attempting to interpret scripture.⁸⁵ Furthermore,

Butler, Maria de los Angeles Gomez-Gonzalez, and Susana M. Duval-Suarez (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2005), 24.

⁸⁴ As documented by Candria, Widdowson disputes the role of context as a means as ascertaining meaning in texts, writing, "...in literature, the message is text-contained, and presupposes no wider context so that everything necessary for its interpretation is to be found within the message itself," Mytha Candria, "The Value of Relevance Theory in Literary Analysis," (Semarang, Indonesia: Diponegoro University, 2011); Henry G. Widdowson, "Stylistics: An Approach to Stylistic Analysis," in *The Stylistics Reader: From Roman Jakobson to the Present*, ed. Jean Jacques Weber (New York: Arnold, 1996), 139. For a lucid case for context as it relates to translation in Relevance Theory, consult David J. Weber, "A Tale of Two Translation Theories," *Journal of Translation* 1, no. 2 (2005).

⁸⁵ Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of the New Testament Greek*. (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), vii.

while one makes use of various linguistic theories and methods, one is also careful not to exclude literary theory as well. This is certainly the case regarding genre as linguists and literary theorists rarely agree on a definition.⁸⁶

Given the above understanding of language texts as functional, or consisting of choices made by authors, one is better able to understand the role and importance of genre in the interpretive process.

As one attempts to define genre, a unanimous description is unlikely and one may best define genre in comparison to other linguistic or literary concepts, such as register, or in other words, a larger category of writings called text types. Beginning with Halliday and Matthiessen's cline of instantiation is helpful in defining and distinguishing genre from register and placing it within the spectrum of language studies.⁸⁷ They understand that the system of language is its various possibilities or potential for use and they place this at one pole on their cline. Since potential is not actuality, they place at the opposite end of their cline the actual use of language or its instantiation in a text. Once one has a series of instantiated texts, or various texts produced within a context or culture, one can then examine texts for similarities and common patterns. When one acquires a group of similar texts, they call these text types, which authors produce in similar contexts, called situation types, then one has a register, or "a functional variety of language."⁸⁸ A register occupies the middle ground in the cline of instantiation between potential and instantiation.

⁸⁶ One is aware, as Collins' points out, that some object to the idea of genre, arguing "that genres cannot actually be defined, although we may know one when we see it," John J. Collins, "Introduction: The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered," in *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 9. Collins responds to such critics by noting their objections provide alternatives that are "too vague to be satisfactory as a basis for genre recognition," *ibid.*, 11.

⁸⁷ Halliday and Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 28.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 29. This is by no means the only way to understand the term register, and while one will use this general understanding in this writing, one is not bound to it. For various uses of the concept of register, see Annabelle

In some theories of grammar, what Halliday and Matthiessen call a register, is a genre,⁸⁹ although Halliday called genre a mode.⁹⁰ Here, one understands register as a larger category called text type. For instance, one may summarize the difference between register and genre, as in the paragraph above, by noting that a text type may be a larger category of writing such as Greco-Roman epistles, but a genre might be an epistle of friendship, which is more specific yet.⁹¹ However, one understands genre here to go further than register. While register deals with text types and its varieties in different situations or context, genre also includes the idea of purpose.⁹²

Lukin, Alison R. Moore, Maria Herke, Rebekah Wegener, and Canzhong Wu, "Halliday's model of register revisited and explored," *Linguistics and the Human Sciences* 4, no. 2 (2011): 190-191.

⁸⁹ The debate as to whether these terms are interchangeable or entirely different concepts is unending and unsettled. See David YW Lee, "Genres, Registers, Text Types, Domains, and Styles: Clarifying the Concepts and Navigating a Path through the BNC Jungle," *Language Learning & Technology* 5, no. 3 (September 2001); Lukin, Moore, Herke, Wegener, and Wu, "Halliday's model of register revisited and explored." BNC is the acronym for the British National Corpus, see "British National Corpus", University of Oxford <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/> (accessed 19 December 2016).

⁹⁰ See note above on field, tenor, and mode. Note the discussion of genre and mode in Mary Macken-Horarik and Misty Adiniou, "Genre and Register in Multiliteracies," in *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics*, ed. Bernard Spolsky and Francis M. Hult (Malden, MA; Oxford, UK; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2008); Theo van Leeuwen, "Genre," in *Introducing Social Semiotics* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁹¹ Lee does not use terms like "broader category" for text-type or understand genre as more specific, but in general, this follows his assertion. He calls the text-type an internal linguistic category, which uses lexical and grammatical data for classification, and he understands genre as an external category, considering "intended audience, purpose, and activity type," and further states that genre refers to "a conventional, culturally recognised grouping of texts based on properties other than lexical or grammatical ... features," Lee, "Genres, Registers, Text Types, Domains, and Styles: Clarifying the Concepts and Navigating a Path through the BNC Jungle," 38.

⁹² Thompson writes that genre, "... can be seen in very simple terms as the register plus communicative purpose." He sees communicate purpose and genre as, "what the interactants are doing through language, and how they organize the language event, ... in order to achieve that purpose," Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 42. The view of genre as register combined with purpose seems to contrast with the view of genre espoused by John J. Collins specifically regarding the book of Revelation. Collins defines literary genre as "a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing." While referring to the these same texts, he further adds, "If they constitute coherent wholes which are intelligible without reference to their present context, they qualify as members of a genre," John J. Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins, Semeia (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 1. It appears he favors a more structural rather than functional definition for genre. Collins later acknowledges, regarding the absence of function in his definition, that "The omission was intentional," believing function is "best discussed at the level of individual texts," Collins, "Introduction: The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered," 13. Marvin Miller, in an effort to apply the functional concept of register to ancient Jewish letters, correctly uses register, but may unknowingly use the concept of purpose with it instead of genre, Marvin L. Miller, "The Performance of Ancient Jewish Letters: From Elephantine to MMT" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Manchester, 2012), 70-71.

More than just describing how authors or speakers form and structure texts, genres “define and organize kinds of social actions, social actions that these texts rhetorically make possible.”⁹³

The chart below, of the author’s own creation, attempts to present possible analysis of the difference between text types and genres. It demonstrates that achievement of genre requirements is through a restricted set of choices.

Similar Text Type (Form/Context) and Similar Function = Similar/Same Genre	Similar Text Type and Dissimilar Function = Similar Text Type but ≠ Genre
Dissimilar Text Type and Similar Function ≠ Similar/Same Text Type or Genre but = Similar Function or Purpose	Dissimilar Text Type and Dissimilar Function ≠ Similar/Same Text Type or Similar/Same Genre

Applying such a view of genre to John’s Apocalypse means that one must at least generally analyze the form, structure, content, purpose of the Book of Revelation, as well as theorizing the potential social action that John might desire.⁹⁴ While the focus of this study is not on genre, at least some brief words concerning Revelation’s specific genre are necessary as they

⁹³ Anis Bawarshi, "The Genre Function," *College English* 62, no. 3 (January 2000): 335. Bawarshi goes on to write that genres function, “on an ideological as well as on a rhetorical level,” and that they are “functional and epistemological – they help us function within particular situations at the same time they help shape the ways we come to know these situations,” *ibid.*, 339-340. Miller, while recognizing that substantial debate exists surrounding the theory and definition of genre, and while arguing that genres are organic and changing, occupies an extreme pole in arguing that genre is more focused on societal action rather than literary forms, Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70, (1984). It seems that a weakness of this theory is that it does not more fully account for literary texts that clearly share formal and structural features, and where one cannot clearly ascertain the purpose or desired societal action in question due to the distance of time and circumstance. Collins, in favoring structural components, recognizes the difficulty of determining function and social setting in ancient literature, Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," 1. Devitt, while seemingly not of the same polarity as Miller, posits that genre “entails purposes, participants, and themes ... and ... understanding a rhetorical and semiotic situation and a social context,” Amy J. Devitt, "Generalizing about Genre: New Conceptions of an Old Concept," *College Composition and Communication* 44, no. 4 (December 1993): 575-576. This view is not without drawbacks as detailed by Inger Askehave and John M. Swales, "Genre Identification and Communicative Purpose: A Problem and A Possible Solution," *Applied Linguistics* 22, no. 2 (2001).

⁹⁴ Aune, more than any other commentator with which the author is aware, addresses various theories of genre in linguistics and literature prior to writing about Revelation’s genre, and even then it is brief, Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, lxxi-lxxii. Two of the most helpful documents related to the genre of Revelation are, *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, ed. John J. Collins, Semeia (Decatur, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1986); *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John Joseph Collins, Semeia (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979).

provide part of the background for understanding its metaphors,⁹⁵ not to mention that nearly every commentator on Revelation begins with some discussion of genre.⁹⁶

1.2 *Genre of the Book of Revelation*

While not a panacea for Revelation's difficulties, the nature of its genre(s) does present guidelines for understanding its temple imagery, and more specifically, its lampstand metaphors. This is because genres, from culture to culture, are a means by which authors effectively communicate using words. Unlike historical narrative, Revelation does not simply tell a story filled with literal representations of facts, locations, people, and events. Revelation is infinitely more complex than this, which is perhaps why the modern reader struggles to understand it. Bauckham identifies John's Apocalypse as combining at least three distinct genres to communicate its message, summarizing it as an apocalyptic prophecy in the form of a circular

⁹⁵ See Deignan's discussion of the relationship between metaphor and genre in Alice Deignan, "Corpus Linguistics and Metaphor," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Similarly, while not writing about metaphor, Runge recognizes that genre is a determining factor in the distribution and use of other discourse devices, Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*, 390.

⁹⁶ Considering this, failure to address the matter is unwise, particularly given the nature of this work, if even in a brief manner. Kistemaker is an exception among modern commentators in that he excludes genre in his introductory comments, Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 3-70. Johnson says nothing about genre specifically, but assumes an epistolary structure, Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*, 26ff. Mounce basically ignores genre as well, seeing apocalyptic not as a "literary classification but an indication of the nature and purpose of the book," though he does later assume an epistolary opening, which appears to be the only epistolary element he considers, Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*. ed. F.F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 64, 67.

letter.⁹⁷ Although Revelation employs more than just the apocalyptic,⁹⁸ prophetic, and epistolary constructs, these serve as three overarching styles in which John frames the apocalypse.⁹⁹

Another important aspect of Revelation, which nearly all commentators overlook, is its narrative style. It is not that commentators overlook the fact that Revelation contains narrative, in fact, it is just the opposite. As Collins definition of Apocalypse contains recognition of narrative, many modern commentators quickly point out that Revelation is narrative. However, narrative elements rarely find their way into their actual discussion of Revelation. As with the other literary constructs here, one does not exclusively focus on narrative elements, but one is aware of them, and when necessary, draws them into the discussion.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to discuss these four potential genres, apocalyptic, prophetic, narrative, and epistolary, in terms of their form, function, and purpose.¹⁰⁰ One begins here in reverse order, asserting that an order of epistle, narrative, prophecy, and apocalyptic, ranks these genres from least to greatest in terms of significance for this work.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-17. So too deSilva, David A. deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 9. Beale acknowledges that commentators prefer the threefold generic approach, but prefers to write of Revelation in terms of an Old Testament "prophetic-apocalyptic" work, positing that commentators have paid too much attention to supposed differences between prophetic and apocalyptic, Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 37. Although interesting, Malina's assertion that Revelation is an astral prophecy overreaches the roots of the Jewish and Christian traditions which produced it; Bruce Malina, *On the Genre and Message of Revelation: Star Visions and Sky Journeys*. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1995). One might also argue, philosophically, that it is not possible to combine genres. There can be only one archetype since combining genres might create a new genre. One may be able to speak of genres and sub-genres, or sub-types.

⁹⁸ One should note here, as referenced in other parts of this work, that the title Apocalypse, the genre apocalyptic, along with the social phenomenon called apocalypticism are three distinct, technical terms, that while related are not the same. A helpful article is Paul D. Hanson, s.v. "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism." ed. Gary A. Harion David Noel Freedman, David F. Graf, John David Pleins, and Astrid B. Beck, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

⁹⁹ For instance, one could contend that the prophetic genre is itself defined by a combination of oracles, such as judgment, salvation, and woe, all of which are arguably in the Apocalypse.

¹⁰⁰ Since Revelation also uses so many sub-genres, such as oracles of judgment and salvation, the study will examine, where necessary, the specific sub-genre of each metaphorical reference. Collins notes the use of sub-genres as well, though she does not refer to them as sub-genres, Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Early Christian Apocalypses," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins, Semeia (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 70.

¹⁰¹ It is coincidence that Aune writes of these three genres in this order as well, Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, lxxii-lxxxii.

1.2.1 Epistle

In discussing Revelation's epistolary nature, Trapp's definition of the ancient letter is quite useful. He states,

A letter is a written message from one person (or set of people) to another, requiring to be set down in a tangible medium, which itself is to be physically conveyed from sender(s) to recipient(s). Formerly, it is a piece of writing that is overtly addressed from sender(s) to recipient(s) by the use at the beginning and end of one of a limited set of conventional formulae of salutation (or some allusive variation on them) which specify both parties to the transaction.¹⁰²

Using this definition, Revelation is a written message from John to the seven churches of Asia and was presumably circulated or physically conveyed to them, and it does possess some of the conventional formulae indicating it is an epistle.¹⁰³ However, the epistolary nature of

¹⁰² As quoted by Muir, John Muir, *Life and Letters in the Ancient Greek World*. (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), 1.

¹⁰³ One wonders, given the discussion of register and genre above, if one is better off to label the general category of epistle as a register and a specific type of epistle, such as a letter of recommendation, as an example of genre.

Revelation does not receive much attention with respect to genre studies,¹⁰⁴ and perhaps rightly so.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, one needs to make at least some comment.¹⁰⁶

Beale, in referring to Revelation's epistolary nature, notes that it opens and closes in typical epistolary style.¹⁰⁷ He is referring to what appear to be typical epistolary openings in 1:4 and the benediction in 22:21. However, Beale's assertion that these verses are a typical opening and closing needs some modification.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Caird completely overlooks any possible epistolary connection in his analysis of the relevant verses, George B. Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 9-23. Smalley, in an otherwise lengthy and careful commentary, virtually disregards epistle in his examination of genre, and only briefly writes of it with respect to literary setting and his comments on these opening verses, Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 6-7, 26-38. Beckwith, writing a type of commentary unlike any on Revelation in the modern era, apparently fails to mention it either, preferring to focus on Revelation as apocalyptic prophecy, with emphasis on prophecy, though he does seem to include some small elements of rhetoric, Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. (New York: MacMillan Company, 1919), 239-310. Hemer's classic work on the letters to the seven churches, which would seem to be a very promising regarding epistolary genre, ignores the topic entirely and focuses on the historical setting of the letters rather than the epistolary form and function of the letters, Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*. (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK; Livonia, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Dove Booksellers, 2001).

¹⁰⁵ Yarbro Collins is adamant that the epistolary form in Revelation is unimportant. She writes it is an "error of misplaced emphasis to say that the book of Revelation is primarily a letter in form," that "The epistolary form is subordinated to and in the service of the book's revelatory character," and finally, "the use of the letter form is quite superficial," Yarbro Collins, "The Early Christian Apocalypses," 70. Aune interprets her to mean that the epistolary structure is external to the actual book, and posits that even if superficial, the epistolary guise may have aided the book in circulation among the churches and reading, citing Colossians 4:16 as an example. He provides ample evidence that prophetic letters are not uncommon in the ANE, but concludes that this evidence only demonstrates that epistles can be used to communicate such information and offers little insight into form and context, Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, lxxii-lxxiii. Ramsey Michaels helpfully adds, in discussing the title, that "no one refers to the Revelation as the 'letter of John'," perhaps to avoid associating it with the three shorter epistles of John, which, ironically he notes, do not officially bear the name of John, J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. ed. Scot McKnight, Guides to New Testament Exegesis, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 21.

¹⁰⁶ Johnson, more than many modern commentators, comments widely on the epistolary structure of Revelation, both in his introduction, referenced here, and throughout his comments, Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*, 26-29.

¹⁰⁷ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 38. The problem with this, as Aune adroitly points out, is that "almost any ancient literary form or genre could be bracketed with the opening and/or closing formulaic features of the letter form," thus, the real issue is whether or not the epistolary structure is endemic to Revelation, Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, lxxii.

The opening of an epistle, particularly a New Testament Epistle or Pauline Epistle,¹⁰⁸ includes a sender,¹⁰⁹ addressee(s), greeting, and prayer.¹¹⁰ One must include the caveat of a New Testament epistle as Mullins points out that the greeting, unlike in the New Testament, is not always a part of the opening in an ancient Greek epistle and therefore must be distinguished, at least to a degree, from the New Testament epistle.¹¹¹ One must conclude then, that it is not the greeting that marks these introductory verses as epistolary, but rather the greeting as combined with other aspects of epistolary conventions. Moreover, as Beale notes, Revelation lacks a typical thanksgiving/prayer section that one might expect, particularly in a New Testament epistle. Thus, Revelation possesses several elements of an epistle, but it is hardly typical.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Schüssler Fiorenza believes that the author of Revelation “seems consciously to imitate the form of the Pauline letter and thus indirectly to claim the authority of Paul for his work of prophecy.” She goes on to write that the prescript of Revelation is very similar to Galatians, Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 149.

¹⁰⁹ Although not what one would call a scholarly study of the Book of Revelation, Hadjiantoniou is rare in his focus upon the epistolary concepts of the Apocalypse, G.A. Hadjiantoniou, *The Postman of Patmos*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961). His hypothetical reconstructions of the historical events surrounding the writing and delivery of the seven letters to the seven churches is fanciful, but reflects a creative sensitivity to history lacking in many commentaries. For instance, when writing of the seven letters, he refers to John as the Postman, not the sender, a title he reserves for God and Jesus. He further supposes that John the sent letters via the Royal mail on a boat across the sea, *ibid.*, 9. However, when one uses Hadjiantoniou’s own postal ideas, it seems that John is not the Postman, but rather Jesus’ amanuensis. Someone in the imperial mail system or colleague of John would serve as the actual postman. Hadjiantoniou’s work is imaginative, but unconvincing. Although Richards focuses upon Paul, his book on the practical aspects of ancient letter writing, such as the use of an amanuensis, is helpful for the epistolary study of John’s Apocalypse as well, E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter-Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collections*. (Downers Grove, IL; Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press; Apollos, 2004).

¹¹⁰ For a basic introduction to the elements of epistles in the context of the Pauline letters of the NT, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. ed. Scot McKnight, Guides to New Testament Exegesis, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1990), 23-50.

¹¹¹ Terence Y. Mullins, “Greeting as a New Testament Form,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87, no. 4 (December 1968). One must also recognize that epistle is a broad genre, with numerous types of specific letters, which may vary according to purpose, form, and function. New Testament epistle is an adequate title for the specific genre of letters included in the later Christian canon, recognizing that even this is a general term.

¹¹² This may be due to the flexibility of letters, depending on purpose. For while they have some common elements, authors did not rigidly apply them. Muir states that “letters intended for specific purposes began to acquire their own loose rules,” but observing “the form was flexible but fairly predictable,” Muir, *Life and Letters in the Ancient Greek World*, 4.

The lack of a thanksgiving/prayer section for a NT epistle is some matter of concern, at least in determining the purpose of Revelation as an epistle.¹¹³ This is because, as Schreiner writes, “thanksgivings and intercessory prayers often signal the major themes in the letter.”¹¹⁴ Lacking this introduction, Beale suggests that one explore chapter 1 or chapters 1-3, as functioning as an introduction for the entire book.¹¹⁵ Roloff believes the doxology of 1:5b-8 functions in place of Paul’s traditional thanksgiving or prayer.¹¹⁶ It may be that John intentionally omits such patterns because he has not primarily designed Revelation as an epistle and, as such, does not want to mislead readers with respect to his purpose.

What Revelation does possess in the opening of 1:4 is a sender, John, along with an addressee, the seven churches in Asia.¹¹⁷ It also possesses a greeting that begins typically with grace and peace, but quickly evolves into something atypical given the length of the greeting.¹¹⁸ In other NT epistles, one can witness relatively lengthy introductions of the author,¹¹⁹ but their

¹¹³ *Inter alia*, the lack of a thanksgiving and prayer section for Paul is so unusual, it leads Murphy-O’Conner to conclude that Paul was not the author of 1 Timothy and Titus, Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills*. Good News Studies, vol. 41 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1995), 61. Ironically, in the same discussion, he finds excuses as to why Paul diverges from his ordinary pattern regarding the thanksgivings in Galatians and 2 Corinthians, but offers no possible reasons for similar divergence in 1 Timothy and Titus.

¹¹⁴ Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 29. See also Peter T. O’Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul*. (Leiden: Brill, 1977); Gordon P. Wiles, *Paul’s Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St. Paul*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974). For NT epistolary openings other than Paul, read Philip L. Tite, “The Compositional Function of the Petrine Prescript: A Look at 1 Pet 1:1-3,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39, no. 1 (March 1996).

¹¹⁵ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 39.

¹¹⁶ Jürgen Roloff, *The Revelation of John*. trans., John E. Alsup, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 23. He also alleges, without substantiation, that these verses are a confessional formula, “the *Sitz im Leben* of which is apparently a baptismal service.”

¹¹⁷ The addressee of several NT epistles is a church or churches, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, Philemon 2.

¹¹⁸ Muir notes that to omit a greeting entirely was something reserved for autocrats, as in the case of Alexander the Great, Muir, *Life and Letters in the Ancient Greek World*, 3. One wonders what the implications of an extended greeting, such as here Revelation, might indicate. John also does not use the typical “God our/the Father” language in his greeting (Rom. 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:3, 2 Cor. 1:2, Gal. 1:3, Eph. 1:2, Phil. 1:2, Col. 1:2, 2 Thess 1:2, 1 Tim. 1:2, 2 Tim. 1:2, Phlm. 3, 2 John 1:3) though he includes some characterization of both God and Jesus Christ, as is consistent with these NT epistles.

¹¹⁹ Rom. 1:1-6, Gal. 1:1, 1 Tim. 1:1, 2 Tim. 1:1, Titus 1:1-3, 1 John 1:1-2. James 1:1 and 3 John 1:1 contain the shortest epistolary openings in the NT. 1 Peter 1:2 may contain the most extensive segment regarding addressees in the NT.

greetings are generally short.¹²⁰ One believes Revelation 1:9 may also contain disclosure, though not the same formula found in some NT epistles, marking the introduction of the epistolary body.¹²¹

Finally, while many commentators view 1:1-3 as a sort of epistolary prologue, one here wonders whether it is a kind of first epistolary introduction. It demonstrates a progression of the origin of the letter that John produces. God, as the ultimate sender, gives the Revelation to Jesus Christ, the first addressee or recipient, who in turn sends an angel, the second recipient, to show it to John, the third recipient, who in turn shares it with the seven churches in Asia, the fourth recipients.¹²² In this understanding, the makarism of 1:3 could function in a similar way to the εὐλογητὸς in 2 Cor. 1:3, Eph. 1:3, and 1 Pet. 1:3, which is another way of introducing a thanksgiving/prayer like segment.

Revelation also possesses a closing in 22:21. Given the use of χάρις, grace, this verse falls under the category of a grace benediction, prevalent in the Pauline corpus.¹²³ Although Revelation lacks many other typical elements as found in Paul's letters, such as travel plans or

¹²⁰ Rom. 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:3, 2 Cor. 1:2, Eph. 1:2, Phil. 1:2, Col. 1:2, 1 Thess. 1:1, 2 Thess. 1:2, 1 Tim. 1:2, 2 Tim. 1:2, Titus 1:4, James 1:1, 1 Pet. 1:2, 2 Pet. 1:2, 2 John 1:3, Jude 1:2. The exception being Gal. 1:3-5.

¹²¹ Although John does not use the typical NT epistolary disclosure, with verbs of knowing such as γινώσκω, he does disclose personal information and his situation. He twice uses the aorist middle indicative, first person singular, ἐγενομῆν, from γίνομαι, in 1:9 and 1:10, which may substitute as a disclosure verb. Porter and Pitts provide at least one example of its use in ancient epistles as part of a disclosure formula from P.Hib. I 40. There it is the aorist middle subjunctive, third person plural, γένηται, Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, "The Disclosure Formula in the Epistolary Papyri and in the New Testament: Development, Form, Function, and Syntax," in *The Language of the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 422; John L. White, "Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90, (1971). Johnson assumes 1:9 begins the body but offers no support, Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*, 28-29, 47.

¹²² Bauckham, while not discussing epistolary structure, calls this a chain of revelation, Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 1.

¹²³ Jeffrey A.D. Weima, "The Pauline Letter Closings: Analysis and Hermeneutical Significance," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5, (1995): 178. Murphy O'Connor also notes that while many of Paul's opening greetings express grace from, ἀπό, God and then Jesus Christ, the closing contrarily wishes that the grace of Jesus Christ be with, μετὰ, you, Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills*, 100. Revelation follows this pattern.

commendations, one may construe 22:18-19 as final exhortations or warnings, typical in Paul, and understand the final, “Come, Lord Jesus,” in 22:20, as a prayer request.¹²⁴

As for New Testament epistles, Beale broadly states that the purpose of other NT letters is to address problems in the church.¹²⁵ In this way, he sees Revelation as possibly addressing problems within the seven churches in Asia.¹²⁶ Similarly, deSilva writes that as an epistle, John not only wanted his readers to understand his writing, but he desired “to shape their perceptions of their everyday realities, and motivate a particular response to their circumstances.”¹²⁷

While uncertainty exists as to John’s exact purpose, these above positions, that John addresses church issues and desires his audience to respond appropriately to their circumstances are supported by the makarism of 1:3, which calls for the reader and hearer to obey the words within the prophecy, and is further supported by the context of the letters to the seven churches, indicating that nearly all the seven churches are failing in some moral aspect.¹²⁸

It appears that while an epistolary structure or purpose may not be the dominant framework of Revelation, it would be unwise to dismiss epistle entirely as having any influence on the Apocalypse’s message.

This is especially true regarding Revelation’s lampstand metaphors, which one explores later. If John has in mind some covenant purpose, as one notes previously, regarding the “kingdom and priest” language of Rev. 1:5b-6, then this potential thanksgiving/prayer section,

¹²⁴ Schreiner includes an excellent list of components in Pauline closings, Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 29-30.

¹²⁵ Boring, without labeling his discussion as genre, asserts that Revelation is a Pastoral Letter. Although he offers no support or explanation as to what he might mean, it is presumably like Beale’s assessment. Boring also posits that the use of βιβλίον in 22:18 can refer to a letter, rather than a book, though he again provides no examples, M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation*. ed. James Luther, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1989), 5-8.

¹²⁶ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 39.

¹²⁷ deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation*, 9.

¹²⁸ This position on the role of NT epistles is consistent with the idea that genre is related to social action, per Miller above, Miller, “Genre as Social Action.”

which is critical to epistolary purpose, may mean that John is calling the churches to covenant faithfulness, as well as condemning the world for violating God's covenant. If true, the lampstand metaphors of chapters 1 and 11 would then play an integral role in calling people to covenant obedience or in condemning the world for covenant violations.

Moreover, as one will discuss later, this epistolary structure will both reflect the contextual purposes of John's lampstand metaphors, among others, and assist in creating a new context for the same metaphors.

1.2.2 *Narrative*

Nearly all modern commentaries recognize that Revelation is apocalyptic, using the definition of Collins one notes above. In recognizing that Revelation is apocalyptic, this should, by extension, indicate that it contains narrative. However, no critical commentary today examines the actual narrative elements of Revelation. It is a lacuna that this dissertation basically continues, with one small exception, characterization.

Before proceeding with a brief description of characterization, one begins with a definition of narrative. Herman and Vervaeck, among others, offer a description of narrative, rather than a definition per se. They note that a traditional definition is to see narrative as a sequence of events.¹²⁹

However, they also cite Forster, who attempted to answer the question, "What kind of sequence of events appears in a narrative."¹³⁰ Forster distinguished between story and plot.¹³¹ A

¹²⁹ Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, *A Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. ed. David Herman, Frontiers of Narrative (Lincoln, NE; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 11.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Gunn and Fewell see story and narrative as interchangeable, David Gunn and Dana Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 1-3.

story is simply a chronological sequence of events, whereas a plot refers “... to the causal connection between those events.”¹³²

In noting Forster, Herman and Vervaeck disagree that plot requires causal connections, but instead relies upon “... a wealth of relevant connections that transcend mere chronology.”¹³³ That said, one disagrees with them in that they believe the reader introduces these connections. Such a reader-oriented approach defies logic, since it circumvents the relationship between communicator and audience, regardless of medium. Readers may make as many connections as they concerning a story, but it does not make them relevant, correct, or even useful. Apart from efforts to understand the artistry and poetry of the author, a reader can make a story mean anything he or she wishes, which violates the idea of constraint, which one addresses multiple places elsewhere in this dissertation.

One sees narrative as a related sequence of events, laid out in a constructed story, possessing plot, scenes, point of view,¹³⁴ characterization, setting, and dialogue/monologue or direct speech. However, one also does not believe that narrative is a genre. It better fits the description of a larger text type. For narrative to be a genre, it would need to have specific kinds of stories, possessing more than shared structural similarities, but also shared purpose. Hero stories, for instance, might be a generic category within narrative.

Even viewing narrative as a text type does not inhibit the use of the shared elements of the larger text type of narrative for this dissertation. For instance, while examining the specific generic purpose of each micro-narrative in Revelation goes beyond the scope of this work, and even examining specific purposes of potential narrative genres for the passages under

¹³² Herman and Vervaeck, *A Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, 11-12.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹³⁴ Herman and Vervaeck write of narrator and narration, which may be helpful, *ibid.*, 11.

consideration here eludes this dissertation as well, exploring narrative devices in general, such as characterization, may be helpful.¹³⁵

Following Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan,¹³⁶ Herman and Vervaeck see three types of characterization in narrative.¹³⁷ They understand that authors may describe characters directly, indirectly, or by analogy.¹³⁸ Direct characterization involves an “enumeration of character traits,” which may also include references to “... psychological states as well as to outward appearance.”¹³⁹ Indirect characterization works “... based on metonymy.”¹⁴⁰ In indirect characterization, a character’s actions, words, appearance, and environment “... betray his social position, his ideology, and his psychology.”¹⁴¹

Lastly, an author may describe characters using analogy, which “... leads to metaphor instead of metonymy.”¹⁴² Here, an author establishes a character’s identity via implicit or explicit comparisons. These metaphors often relate to the text’s message and communicate a “... specific ethic or ideology.”¹⁴³

In reading Revelation and examining the metaphors of alpha and omega and lampstands in chapters 1 and 11, John evidently uses metaphors regularly as a method of characterization. In the case of Revelation 1:8, God calls himself the alpha and omega. It is a metaphor that refers to both God and Jesus in the Apocalypse. The churches in 1:20, understood as people not buildings,

¹³⁵ Herman and Vervaeck see characterization as so important to narrative that only time, or the temporal nature of narrative, comes before it in their discussion of narrative elements, *ibid.*, 67.

¹³⁶ Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. Second ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹³⁷ These characterization methods are distinct from character types, which this dissertation does not address. For more on the distinction between character methods and character types, see Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*. (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 23-42.

¹³⁸ Herman and Vervaeck, *A Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, 67-68.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

are lampstands. In 1:20, the angels are stars. In Rev. 11:3-4, the two witnesses are the two olive trees and two lampstands before the Lord. All four of these examples help form John's strategic method of characterization using analogy or metaphor.¹⁴⁴

While one will not examine other narrative elements in detail, or even character types in detail, one does proceed with the understanding that the use of metaphor is a common, accepted, and significant method of narrative characterization, and that John uses this method since the dominant metaphors examined in this dissertation all relate to characters and their identity.¹⁴⁵

1.2.3 Prophecy

The conversation around the various genres of Revelation inevitably involves the idea of prophecy for John calls his work a prophecy in 1:3 as he writes, "honored is the one who reads and hears the words of this prophecy."¹⁴⁶ He repeats that his work is a prophecy four more times, all in chapter 22.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Other examples of metaphor in John's characterization include Satan as the dragon and the false prophet as the beast from the earth, originating in chapters 12 and 13.

¹⁴⁵ One area of needed future study in Revelation relates to the importance of characterization for John's overall message. Osborne argues that "The success of a story depends in large part upon its success in developing interesting, real people with whom the readers can identify," Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 159.

¹⁴⁶ See note above by Hanson supporting a translation of honored or honorable, rather than blessed.

¹⁴⁷ 22:7, 22:10, 22:18, 22:19. Ramsey Michaels notes that 19:10 may also contribute to an understanding of prophetic genre as well, Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, 22. Boring sees prophecy not as a genre but rather as an indicator of the nature of the communication, namely, that it is a divine revelation delivered to God's people via a prophet. As such, it is authoritative and provides God's interpretation or perspective on historical events that the audience is experiencing, Boring, *Revelation*, 23-26. In this view, genre would refer to the textual structure of God's message through the prophet, which Boring, as noted above, sees as a letter. One should also point out that John is never directly called a prophet in Revelation, as noted by Yarbro Collins as well, although she does state that John indirectly presents himself as a prophet and later concludes that he is an itinerate prophet, Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Book of Revelation," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. John J. Collins (New York: Continuum, 1998), 385-386. In 22:9, the NIV, 2011 edition, in recording the angel's speech as John falls face down attempting to worship him, incorrectly translates, "I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets ..." which can be taken to mean that John is also a prophet, *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011). However, the UBS Greek rendering is, "σύνδουλός σου εἰμι καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν," which should read, "I am your co-servant (or fellow servant) and (the fellow servant) of your brothers, the prophets," Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce Metzger, eds., *The Greek New Testament*, Fifth Revised ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft; American Bible Society; United Bible Societies, 2014). This is a close rendering in the previous NIV, 1984 edition, which records, "I am a fellow

Among the arguments regarding Revelation being a prophetic book are several general categories of belief, summarized here. Some writers argue that Revelation is purely prophetic, others that it is a prophetic blend, and still others that Revelation derives from prophecy, in some way, or consider it a subset of prophecy.

Ramsey Michaels writes that one should understand apocalypse and prophecy as synonymous rather than being two different kinds of communication. He points to Paul's use of both terms in 1 Corinthians 14:6 as types of utterances from a prophet and concludes that one should translate apocalypse, rather than transliterate it, as revelation and that a revelation "is an oracle of some kind granted to a Christian prophet."¹⁴⁸ Thus, one should interpret the word apocalypse "to mean simply 'a prophecy'."¹⁴⁹

Lenski, after what appears to be an impassioned defense, concludes that Revelation is a divine prophecy,¹⁵⁰ claiming that to label Revelation as among a class of "apocalyptic

servant with you and with your brothers the prophets...", *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984). Minear goes too far in saying that the references to prophecy in Revelation indicate that John thinks of himself as a prophet, Paul S. Minear, *New Testament Apocalyptic*. ed. Paul S. Minear, Lloyd R. Bailey, and Victor Paul Furnish, *Interpreting Biblical Texts* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1981), 16. So too Sweet, who states, "the author writes under the guise of a prophet ...", John P.M. Sweet, *Revelation*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1979), 1. This assertion goes too far because, as Schneidewind demonstrates in his OT study, it may be that titles such as prophet, seer, man of God, and servant of God, which, among others, are often taken as synonymous, are not always synonyms and that specific titles, depending on historical context, may play a socio-linguistic role in the type of message spoken and to whom it is spoken. Schneidewind also argues that someone in the OT may be "in the Spirit," as John was in Rev. 1:10, and prophesy without being a prophet. Finally, he addresses another title of importance to the Apocalypse, that of servant of God. The text refers to John as "his servant," referring to God, in 1:1. While the OT uses this title for prophets, it is not exclusively so and one might even see this in the Apocalypse itself. See William M. Schneidewind, *The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period*. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series*, vol. 118 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 31-79.

¹⁴⁸ The problem with such a definition is that it limits this type of oracle to the Christian community and does not properly attempt to integrate the idea, as Collins does, that this material is present in Judaism and Christianity, as well as other cultures. Although Collins restricts his discussion to a specific time period, 250 B.C.E. – 250 C.E., and to the area of the eastern Mediterranean, he attempts a broader understanding, Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," 4. Moreover, it is highly speculative to construct a definition citing one instance of a word in the biblical corpus, particularly given its relatively frequent use and given its multiple occurrences in proximity to the words "Jesus Christ."

¹⁴⁹ Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, 23.

¹⁵⁰ Richard C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation*. (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1943), 18-19.

literature,” is to ignore that it is different from other so-called Jewish apocalypses because it is contains “one mark” that the others do not, “truth, genuineness, reality.”¹⁵¹

Rather than seeing Revelation as belonging to the general genre of prophecy, some writers label Revelation as apocalyptic, deriving from the first word in the Greek text of Revelation. However, their definition of apocalyptic reflects a closer relationship to prophecy than the definition given below in the apocalyptic genre section. They view apocalyptic as a kind of prophetic literature, though not exactly so, but derived from it.¹⁵²

For instance, Roloff categorizes Revelation as part of a group of literature termed apocalyptic and states that apocalyptic developed out of Old Testament prophecy and wisdom literature.¹⁵³ Mangina, though disagreeing with Buber, cites him as similarly believing that apocalyptic derived from prophecy, but degenerately so, as Buber claimed “prophets as hardy realists, the apocalypticists as heaven-struck idealists.”¹⁵⁴ Along similar lines, Easley considers revelation as apocalyptic, but qualifies this by writing that prophecy is “a broader category of writing,” and apocalyptic is a “sub-category of prophecy.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 16. One gets the sense that Lenski is mocking the *Religionswissenschaft* School, as he mentions it by name, and decries as spurious its efforts to consider Revelation alongside of non-biblical literature. One wonders why Lenski did not think it possible to consider Revelation along with these documents while not assigning to them the same authority or truthfulness.

¹⁵² Koch states that H.H. Rowley emphasized the unity of prophecy and apocalyptic in his 1944 publication, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*. He quotes Rowley as writing “The prophets foretold the future that should arise out of the present, while the apocalyptists foretold the future that should break into the present,” Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*. ed. Peter Ackroyd et al., Studies in Biblical Theology (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1970), 51.

¹⁵³ Roloff, *The Revelation of John*, 3.

¹⁵⁴ Joseph L. Mangina, *Revelation*. ed. R.R. Reno, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010), 27.

¹⁵⁵ Kendell H. Easley, *Revelation*. Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 12 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 24.

Long before many current writers, Glasson posited that though related, and though they may overlap, prophecy and apocalypse are not the same.¹⁵⁶ He offers one of the few efforts to describe the form or characteristics of prophecy, but he posits unsubstantiated differences, claiming they are four-fold: prophecy is usually spoken, though it may be preserved in writing,¹⁵⁷ prophecy is given in straightforward terms, but apocalypses adopt “cartoon” language,¹⁵⁸ apocalypses are for times of crisis and danger, and many apocalypses possess assumed names, though this does not fit Revelation.¹⁵⁹

Ladd, for his part, articulates well some of the difficulties in the relationship between prophecy and apocalyptic, arguing that a widely distinction between the two rests in their eschatology. Prophecy, he writes, possesses an eschatology that is “this-worldly,” where “history is the vehicle of the kingdom,” and “the seed of David who will arise from among men,” will,

¹⁵⁶ He writes that they possess “different tendencies and emphases,” and that the difference is “better felt than defined,” Thomas F. Glasson, *The Revelation of John*. ed. P.R. Ackroyd, A.R.C. Leaney, and J.W. Packer, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (London, New York, Ibadan: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 1-2.

¹⁵⁷ This is an odd assertion, left unaddressed, given that John calls his work a prophecy but someone (Jesus, a voice from heaven, or an angel) tells him to write seventeen times throughout the work. Neither does it address instances of OT prophecy, searched here in the Greek OT, such as Habakkuk 2:2, Isaiah 8:1, Isaiah 30:6-8, Jeremiah 25:13, Jeremiah 28:60 (51:60 in NRSV), Jeremiah 37:2 (30:2 in NRSV), Jeremiah 43:28 (36:28 in NRSV), which all seem to indicate that the writing of these prophecies was a significant desire of God, not just something spoken. The relationship between the oral and the written in prophetic studies is not a settled matter. Motyer, contra Glasson, recognizes for instance, that while some portions of Isaiah, as prophecy, were spoken, one must recognize that other sections are carefully structured written documents, J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 23. Lenski, though without much elaboration, recognizes the roll of writing in the apocalypse, though this too, as noted above, may be found in prophecy, Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation*, 6. Ironically, Nissinen writes that, “all we know about ancient prophecy is based on written sources,” Martti Nissinen, “How Prophecy Became Literature,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 19, no. 2 (2005): 153. Stuart further writes, regarding Hosea, that the assumption of speaking before writing prophetic oracles is unproven, John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*. Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 8. More careful inspection of the relationship between oral and written traditions in the prophets and prophecy is in Stuart Weeks, “Literacy, Orality, and Literature in Israel,” in *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in honour of Graham Ivor Davies*, ed. James K. Aitken, Katharine J. Dell, and Brian A. Mastin, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011); Robert C. Culley, “Orality and Writtness in the Prophetic Texts,” in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd, SBL Symposium Series (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

¹⁵⁸ One assumes he is referring to figurative language.

¹⁵⁹ Glasson, *The Revelation of John*, 1-2.

“rule over the restored earthly kingdom.”¹⁶⁰ Apocalyptic, on the other hand, “despairs of history,” and “salvation would come only beyond history,” and “the kingdom is entirely beyond history in a new and a different world.”¹⁶¹ To be clear, Ladd is only writing of this classic distinction, not advocating for it. In fact, he would likely argue that the apocalyptic eschatology is a continuum of prophetic, where the “this-worldly,” stained by evil, sin, and decay, gives way to the “other-worldly,” in which exists the “perfected kingdom of God.”¹⁶²

Harrington takes still another, vague stance, claiming Revelation is “a mixed genre ... a prophetic-apocalyptic writing, in the form of a letter...,” stating that it is not possible “to slot Revelation into one, readily defined form.”¹⁶³ In reading his work, it almost seems as though one could philosophically maintain that Revelation has no genre.¹⁶⁴

Oddly, given the surety of their assertions, few commentators of Revelation who argue for its prophetic dominance elaborate on the definition of prophecy for generic purposes.¹⁶⁵ Here writers on the Ancient Near East and Old Testament writers prove more valuable for defining

¹⁶⁰ George Eldon Ladd, “Why Not Prophetic-Apocalyptic?,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76, no. 3 (September 1957): 193.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Wilfrid J. Harrington, *Revelation*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, Sacra Pagina, vol. 16 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1993), 7, 1. Ladd’s article discusses the difficulty of bifurcating apocalyptic and prophetic, both in literature and in tradition, Ladd, “Why Not Prophetic-Apocalyptic?.” Allen has produced an interesting critique on the concept of hybridity in genre, which is what many of the above theories seem to posit, preferring the concept of genre blending, Martina Allen, “Against ‘Hybridity’ in Genre Studies: Blending as an Alternative Approach to Generic Experimentation,” *Trespassing Journal: an online journal of trespassing art, science and philosophy* 2 (Winter 2013) (accessed September 12, 2014).

¹⁶⁴ However, he would surely dispute this.

¹⁶⁵ Robert Thomas attempts an extended definition of prophecy with respect to genre; however, his work is quite tendentious, conspicuously written from a dispensationalist perspective. He offers eleven characteristics of prophecy, which are presumptive, and, in this author’s opinion, he makes numerous unsupported assertions, particularly that anyone who speaks a word of prophecy is a prophet. The greatest weakness of his position is the insistence that prophetic literature must be interpreted literally, which belies his dispensationalist commitment, Robert L. Thomas, “Literary Genre and Hermeneutics in the Apocalypse,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 2, no. 1 (1991).

prophetic characteristics and one can attempt, even while admitting that New Testament prophecy may be a different type, to transfer and adapt their schemes.¹⁶⁶

A general definition of prophecy encompassing documents from across the ANE, including the OT, is from Nissinen, who writes that prophecy “is human transmission of allegedly divine messages.”¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, he postulates that any written source bearing the label of prophecy must have a divine sender, a message, a human transmitter, and a recipient.¹⁶⁸ One of the advantages to this definition intended or not, is that it can also encompass non-writing prophets, whose work others recorded, such as in the case of Samuel.¹⁶⁹ It allows for both oral and written traditions while respecting that written tradition is all that remains from antiquity.¹⁷⁰ It is also general enough to allow for diachronic fluidity in prophetic texts, as constructs of prophecy may change through time.¹⁷¹

Zvi offers a further distinction between prophetic texts and prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible. He defines a “book,”¹⁷² for the purposes of his article, as a document affiliated with a prophetic personage, which claims to communicate knowledge about Yahweh.¹⁷³ This

¹⁶⁶ Recognizing that even then consensus does not exist.

¹⁶⁷ Martti Nissinen and Peter Machinist, *Prophets and Prophecy of the Ancient Near East*. ed. Theodore J. Lewis, Writings from the Ancient World, vol. 12 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 1. Nissinen, in the same place, sees prophecy as a non-inductive branch of divination, not using “systematic observations,” or “scholarly interpretations,” but writing that prophets are “direct mouthpieces of gods.”

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 2. Along similar lines, Clendenen writes that prophecy must have a divine message, an elevated rhetorical style, and sub-genres, such as lawsuit and woe, E. Ray Clendenen, “Textlinguistics and Prophecy in the Book of the Twelve,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46, no. 3 (2003): 386.

¹⁶⁹ Another advantage is that it does not include references to future prediction, including, but not limited to, attempting to determine the exact date of the return of Jesus Christ, which has consumed the populous writings of the U.S. for many years. For instance, see the so-called prophecies of Englishwoman Anne Wentworth regarding how she views the nature of revelation and prophecy in Anne Wentworth, “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*,” ed. Vickie Taft (1679). <http://pid.emory.edu/ark:/25593/17fcc> (accessed 26 May 2015). Note also Edgar Whisenant, 88 *Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*. (Nashville, TN: World Bible Society, 1988).

¹⁷⁰ See Nissinen’s assertion in the notes above.

¹⁷¹ As demonstrated throughout in Lester L. Grabbe and Martti Nissinen, eds., *Constructs of Prophecy in the Former & Latter Prophets & Other Texts*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Roxana Flammini, Ancient Near East Monographs (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011).

¹⁷² Quotes are his.

¹⁷³ Which he defines as legitimate and authoritative knowledge.

type of work will have a clear beginning and ending and “show a significant degree of textual coherence and distinctiveness.”¹⁷⁴

Other writers understand prophecy, especially as it relates to the OT, in terms that are more restrictive. In his two-volume tome on Isaiah, Watts posits, “prophetic books of the OT are a literary form *sui generis*.”¹⁷⁵ Naturally, he begins his analysis of prophetic genre with Isaiah, registering that the first word in Isaiah’s Hebrew text is, *חִזְיוֹן*, vision, and reminding the reader that Obadiah and Nahum have similar beginnings and that, among others, the concept of the “vision” ties Isaiah and the Book of the Twelve together.¹⁷⁶ In this way, he argues that these prophetic books are in fact a part of a genre called “vision literature,” where Yahweh speaks and the prophetic fades.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, he proposes that the authors frame the books around speeches, by Yahweh and others, and that this may be due to the influence of the Greek drama, whereby multiple characters may perform.¹⁷⁸

Stuart, in writing about Hosea through Jonah, says little regarding visions as an element of prophetic literature but chooses to focus on the blessings and curses of the Mosaic covenant as a governing structure. He indicates the prophet and prophecy intertwine, writing that the prophetic role was to be a spokesperson for God and call people to covenant obedience,

¹⁷⁴ Ehud Ben Zvi, "Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books -- Setting an Agenda," in *Writings and Speeches in Israelite and Ancient Near Prophecy*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

¹⁷⁵ Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, xlv. Although there are certainly unique elements, Nissinen finds that “prophecy is cross-cultural, being observable in various cultural environments through human history,” though admitting prophecy established itself primarily in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic cultures, Nissinen and Machinist, *Prophets and Prophecy of the Ancient Near East*, 2.

¹⁷⁶ He also concedes that Jeremiah and Ezekiel are different, Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, xlv. Conversely, Jeremiah 14:14 and 23:16 demonstrate that false prophets have or speak false visions.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ That drama exists in Isaiah and especially in ancient Judaism, is a position apparently central to his interpretation, given the excursus on the subject which follows, *ibid.*, xlvii-liv.

reminding them of the covenant's blessings and curses.¹⁷⁹ One could suppose that Stuart's schema is a specific application fitting Nissinen's general description, in that God/divine is speaking, there is a message, there is a human transmitter, and there is an audience, but Stuart, at least at first glance, shows no indication of relating his works to a wider genre.

Similarly, Frolov fashions the prophet as "Agent Provocateur." He constructs this notion by first demonstrating that the prophet and function of prophecy are relatively rare in the Hexateuch. He surmises, then, that Samuel is the first truly prophetic figure who, in sustained fashion, acts on behalf of God.¹⁸⁰ More distinctively, as prophet, Samuel is to provoke judgment against Eli and his sons and against Israel for rejecting God as king.¹⁸¹

Interestingly, many current scholarly definitions omit any real treatment of the idea of predictive or promise fulfillment. Such definitions were once widespread amongst Christian interpreters modern and ancient, though not exclusively so.¹⁸² Where many of the earliest interpreters of scripture relied almost exclusively on the predicative/fulfillment nature of

¹⁷⁹ Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 2002), xxxii. Stuart goes on to categorize the curses and blessings from the Pentateuch, claiming "twenty-seven types of curses and ten types of restoration blessings," *ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Serge Frolov, "1 Samuel 1-8: The Prophet as Agent Provocateur," in *Constructs of Prophecy in the Former & Latter Prophets & Other Texts*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Martti Nissinen, Ancient Near Eastern Monographs (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 77-78.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 80-82. Frolov here presents a worthwhile debate regarding the conundrum of the people in following the prophet, as Deut. 18:19 records that they should. If they do not follow the prophet's word, they are cursed, but in the case of Samuel, following his words leads to curse as well. One finds many of Frolov's assertions beneficial. However, he goes too far in writing of divine deception with respect to 1 Sam. 4. He states that Samuel's call to arms 4:1 presupposes victory and thus God deceives the people, though he acknowledges that the text does not explicitly state victory, *ibid.*, 82. One could just as easily state that the people deceive themselves by interpreting victory from what may otherwise be an uncertain call to arms. God could have simply told Samuel and the people, "Go to war," without saying anything about victory. An argument from the silence of 1 Sam. 4:1 seems unwise here.

¹⁸² deSilva, while acknowledging the potential for a predictive element in prophecy, provides a helpful and unique definition, writing that prophecy is "a declaration of God's action in the present or of God's evaluative perspective on the present actions of God's people," deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation*, 10. Weeks emphasizes that the nature of prophecy in ANE prophecy as well as OT prophecy focuses on past and present events rather than future events, Stuart Weeks, "Predictive and Prophetic Literature: Can Neferti Help Us Read the Bible?," in *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel*, ed. John Day, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2010), 38-43.

prophecy, few amongst the Reformation traditions today would place such emphasis on prophecy.¹⁸³

In conclusion, if one defines Revelation according to general prophetic concepts, like those of Nissinen and Zvi, that prophecy is a divine message mediated by a human messenger, then Revelation fits under such a category and this is what John may mean when describing his work as prophecy. Even Watts' use of the term vision literature can accommodate Revelation. However, many of the more specific definitions would exclude Revelation from consideration. For instance, John does not appear to provoke judgment, such as Samuel, nor do early interpreters call him a prophet or generally recognize him as one.

The problem seems to lie in calling prophecy a genre. Even a cursory glance at prophetic texts reveals a host of different literary forms, leading to Weeks to conclude that prophetic authors appear to write with little regard to generic constraint.¹⁸⁴ This makes it difficult to identify prophecy with the concept of genre, understood as similar texts and structures, taken together with situation types and purpose. One should best understand the term prophetic in the general terms above and that it should remain as a larger category of work, like a text type, without bearing the more specific concept of genre.

1.2.4 Apocalyptic

Nearly all discussions regarding the genre of Revelation end with the recognition that it is apocalyptic. This is not to use the term in the modern sense in that it somehow conveys

¹⁸³ Childs points this out in a seminal and oft referenced article, Brevard S. Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment: A Study of Contemporary Hermeneutics," *Interpretation* 12, (1958): 259-260.

¹⁸⁴ Weeks further argues that the problem in defining prophecy precisely is that "biblical prophetic literature lacks homogeneity in many key respects," and that "it is difficult to formulate an adequate description for all the prophetic books except in terms of their self-presentation as products of prophecy," Weeks, "Predictive and Prophetic Literature: Can Neferti Help Us Read the Bible?," 27.

catastrophe or the end of the world,¹⁸⁵ but rather to use it in a literary sense,¹⁸⁶ that it is related to a series of ancient writings which bear similar characteristics,¹⁸⁷ and which may or may not include a discussion of the end of the world.¹⁸⁸ Many modern scholars call this group of writings apocalyptic literature.¹⁸⁹ While recognizing that Revelation bears epistolary and prophetic

¹⁸⁵ One of the more fascinating commentaries for this writer to read, based on the reception history of Revelation, and which recognizes how modern readers use the term apocalypse, is Judith Kovacs and Christopher Rowland, *Revelation*. ed. John Sawyer, Christopher Rowland, and Judith Kovacs, Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), especially 1-38. While lacking a thoroughgoing biblical studies perspective, one of the more fascinating approaches to the definition of apocalypse and the book of Revelation is Kevin R. West, "Reading the Signs: Desire in the Apocalyptic Text" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, November 2004). Here West defines apocalyptic in more mundane terms, noting "Whereas all narrative is end-oriented, apocalyptic narrative thematizes this orientation by implicit and explicit reference to the End of the World," *ibid.*, iv. He continues by arguing, "Revelation's promise to 'show what must soon take place' constructs a reader desirous of the divine perspective on the future." West avowedly follows Peter Brooks' erotics of narrative approach which "posits the end of a text as the object of a reader's desire," and argues that the reader of Revelation, drawn in by its symbolism, desires to know the secrets and "textual mysteries" regarding the end of the world, *ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Understanding apocalyptic as a literary genre does not rule out its rhetorical or oral use. John makes it clear in 1:3 that the "one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy" and "those who hear" the prophecy are blessed. Thus, while The Apocalypse is a literary text, it claims to possess an oral element as well. David Barr has provided an insightful and inceptive treatise on the oral techniques of Revelation, particularly with respect to John's use of numerical patterns, such as 7-4-3 and 7-3-2, to enhance its retention for memory, David L. Barr, "The Apocalypse of John as Oral Enactment," *Interpretation* 40, no. 3 (1986).

¹⁸⁷ Russell points out that apocalyptic is a technical term used by Christians from the second century onward to designate texts that bore similarity to Revelation. Although he does identify Christianity as the originator of the term as it relates to genre, he recognizes that it is a form of Jewish literature common from 250 B.C to AD 100, David S. Russell, *Divine Disclosure: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 6.

¹⁸⁸ Rowland simply defines apocalypse as "literary texts which offer revelation specifically divine," Christopher C. Rowland, "Apocalyptic: The Disclosure of Heavenly Knowledge," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: The Early Roman Period*, ed. William Horbury, W.D. Davies, and John Sturdy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 777. Furthermore, he notes with respect to the end of the world, that much confusion exists between the terms apocalyptic and eschatological. While they are not the same, much of the conversation surrounding apocalyptic inevitably ends up discussing eschatology. For his part, in the context of introducing why apocalyptic literature was so neglected in Germany between the years of approximately 1903 to the 1960's, Koch writes that it was popular to understand theological eschatology and apocalyptic as "those descriptions of the future which serve as pure speculations merely to satisfy human curiosity, without any actual interest in salvation, Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, 18. He differentiates this idea of apocalyptic as quite apart from an apocalypse, which is a book. Credit here goes to Russell for making Koch's distinction clearer, Russell, *Divine Disclosure: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic*, 10.

¹⁸⁹ Collins, following Koch, includes a necessary distinction between apocalyptic literature as a literary genre, apocalyptic eschatology as found in apocalyptic literature, and apocalypticism as a sociological phenomenon, Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," 4. While the attitudes and beliefs of the larger category of apocalypticism are universal, Wojcik's work is a reminder that apocalypticism is particularly strong in American Christian fundamentalism, but also notes how pervasive apocalypticism is in secularism as well, Daniel Wojcik, *The End of the World As We Know It: Faith, Fatalism, and Apocalypse in America*. (New York; London: New York University Press, 1997).

elements, as discussed above, the most useful generic classification for this study is that of apocalyptic and the definition of Collins is the one relied upon here. He writes:

“Apocalypse” is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.¹⁹⁰

This definition of apocalypse or apocalyptic literature has several advantages, not the least of which is that it does not limit such literature to a specifically Jewish or Christian framework, but neither does it deny its prominence in these traditions.¹⁹¹ Such a realization is important given that biblical studies is indebted to recognizing that, at times, biblical material reflects wider cultural and social influences than just its own traditions.¹⁹²

Moreover, even if one does see prophecy as a genre, this definition of apocalyptic distinguishes itself from prophecy in that much prophecy, at least in the Judeo-Christian tradition, does not involve extensive mediation by an otherworldly being, namely an angel, and rarely reveals the supernatural world.¹⁹³

The definition is not without weakness. For instance, it does not address any purpose or historical situations that such writings might address. It fails to ask why this revelatory material

¹⁹⁰ Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," 9. Hughes, who for his part includes virtually no introduction in his commentary, including with respect to genre, concludes Revelation is apocalyptic, defining it in this way, "An apocalyptic writing discloses mysteries, generally with respect to the future – mysteries the import of which is sometimes plainly interpreted, but which frequently remain veiled in enigmatic figures and symbols," Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary*. (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Inter-Varsity Press; William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 7. Koch defines apocalyptic as "secret divine disclosures about the end of the world and the heavenly state," Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, 18.

¹⁹¹ Contra Harrington, who calls apocalypse a type of Jewish literature, Harrington, *Revelation*, 1.

¹⁹² E.g. the Hittite-Vassal structures of the Mosaic covenant, as noted by, among others, John Arthur Thompson, "The Significance of the Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Pattern," *Tyndale Bulletin* 13, (October 1963). For efforts to apply this treaty or covenantal form to Revelation, read William H. Shea, "The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1983); Kenneth A. Strand, "A Further Note on the Covenantal Form in the Book of Revelation," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21, no. 3 (Autumn 1983).

¹⁹³ Judeo-Christian prophecy purports a message directly from God and often forgoes mediation. It also tends to give God's perspective on the earthly realm, but rarely, if ever, pulls back the veil of the heavenly world.

appears. Additionally, it does not really address any other structural elements or characteristics of Apocalyptic, nor does it distinguish itself from what many call prophetic literature.¹⁹⁴ In fact, the definition of apocalyptic given here and the definitions of prophetic above are practically interchangeable.¹⁹⁵ Thus, the breadth of Collins' description is a strength, but also may be its greatest weakness. Specificity regarding biblical apocalypses might be in order.

Harrington, for his part, is also a bit skeptical of Collins' definition, arguing that it is difficult to "slot Revelation into one, readily definable form."¹⁹⁶ In attempting to trace John's final work in the pattern of other Jewish Apocalypses, Harrington skillfully adds a critical aspect to his own definition of apocalyptic writing, "One feature of apocalyptic is determinism."¹⁹⁷ That is, there are righteous and wicked people. This key feature, the assumption and assertion that evil and good exist and people fall into both categories, appears an aspect of apocalyptic left

¹⁹⁴ Margaret Barker offers a helpful introduction to the problem of defining apocalyptic literature, especially with respect to the difference between the form and the content of the apocalypses. She argues that while many books that scholars label apocalyptic bear a similar form to Revelation, they are vastly different in content, making it hard to call "apocalyptic" a genre, Margaret Barker, "Slippery Words: III. Apocalyptic," *The Expository Times* 89, no. 11 (August 1978).

¹⁹⁵ Collins himself appears to wrestle with the difference between apocalyptic and prophecy, at least with regard to eschatology, writing in another work that, "The hope for a blessed hereafter is one of the major factors that distinguish the eschatology of the apocalyptic writers from that of the prophets," John J. Collins, *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. John J. Collins, 3 vols., vol. 1 (New York, NY: Continuum, 1998), s.v. "Introduction to Volume 1."

¹⁹⁶ Harrington, *Revelation*, 1.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 4. While on the subject of Jewish apocalypses, Rowland, quoting M. Smith, argues that the use of the word ἀποκάλυψις, used in the sense of a "revelation of God," or "divine secrets," is rare in Jewish literature of the NT period surrounding the Book of Revelation and is more of a NT word, Rowland, "Apocalyptic: The Disclosure of Heavenly Knowledge," 776-777. Kulik notes that Jewish material first uses ἀποκάλυψις in Sirach 22:22. He also transcends the use of the Greek term and seeks a Hebrew equivalent to the concept, initially noting that perhaps חֲזִיוֹן, *hazon*, or חִזְיוֹן, *hizzayon*, vision, is an equivalent term, though it does not quite mean "revelation." He concludes by arguing that the idea of an apocalypse or apocalyptic book is evident in Rabbinic literature, giving particular examples from the Tosefta, and that this corpus uses the term גִּלְיוֹן, *gilayon*, revelation, in place of the term apocalypse, Alexander Kulik, "Genre without a Name: Was There a Hebrew Term for 'Apocalypse'?", *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 40, (2009). The problem with Kulik's analysis as it relates to this study is that it appears the Tosefta is a later provenance and the references he cites are negative reactions to Christian literature, although, as Kulik points out, they may also include references to later Jewish apocalypses, such as the Apocalypse of Abraham. There does not appear to be any evidence that, even if *gilayon* is the equivalent, that this definition of it predates the Apocalypse of John.

untouched by most definitions. Again, however, one could readily argue that prophetic texts contain the same determinism.

Possibly the one distinguishing feature of Collins' definition is the angelic or heavenly mediator. This appears absent from most definitions on prophecy, which tend to reflect more direct communication between God and his prophet. The exception here is Zechariah, whom Zechariah 1:1 and 1:7, refers to as a prophet and yet his vision which begins in 1:7 contains an angelic mediator. This might be the best example for seeing prophecy as divine revelation and apocalyptic as a more specific genre which includes mediation.

One of the critical aspects of Collin's definition of apocalyptic which is most neglected regarding John's Apocalypse is that of the narrative framework in which the revelatory message occurs. In fact, few, if any, thorough-going works exist which examine the critical elements of the narrative and their interconnectedness, including its setting, plot,¹⁹⁸ action sequences or scenes,¹⁹⁹ point of view,²⁰⁰ characterization, and dialogue or direct speech.²⁰¹ This lacuna also

¹⁹⁸ If Hogan is correct, then the study of plot development in literature is a study of human emotions. He argues that plot is constructed for the purpose of engaging human emotions, which is, according to him, what makes the story interesting in the first place, Patrick Colm Hogan, *Affective Narratology*. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 2. One could argue, for example, that when metaphor occurs in the plot of Revelation, that John's purpose is affective, thus the metaphor engages the emotions of the audience. Although approaching Revelation from the perspective of rhetoric rather than plot, deSilva demonstrates the necessity of studying John's appeal to emotions, exploring the *pathos* of Revelation as opposed to its *ethos* or *logos*, David A. deSilva, "The Strategic Arousal of Emotions in the Apocalypse of John: A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of the Oracles to the Seven Churches," *New Testament Studies* 54, no. 1 (January 2008).

¹⁹⁹ Culley's introduction to the concept of theme and variation in biblical narrative, along with a paradigm of action sequences, is worthwhile, Robert Culley, *Theme and Variation*. (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 56.

²⁰⁰ Ramsey Michaels' understanding of 1:19 as presenting an "omniscient narrator, or at least a knowledgeable one," is an excellent use of narrative device, such as point of view, to understand a controversial passage and provides an early model for efforts to use narrative in understanding particular passages much differently than they otherwise might be evaluated, J. Ramsey Michaels, "Revelation 1.19 and the Narrative Voices of the Apocalypse," *New Testament Studies* 37, no. 4 (October 1991).

²⁰¹ One prefers the term direct speech since much of the recorded speech in biblical narrative is monologue rather than dialogue. A good introduction to these characteristics in OT narrative, but which are transferable to the NT as well, is Richard L. Pratt Jr., *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narrative*. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 1990). Robert Alter's work on narrative is seminal to any literary analysis, but particularly helpful in its explication of the need for literary analysis beyond what he calls "excavative scholarship," that is, simply relying upon disciplines like textual criticism and historiography, Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981), 13.

includes exploration of how these narrative elements work together in demonstrating the spatial and temporal dynamics of John's narrative, such as how the heavenly narrative of God intersects with or supersedes the earthly narrative of the churches and the cosmic conflict that encompasses both.²⁰²

While such an in-depth exploration is not the focus of this dissertation, these narrative elements warrant attention by examining the dynamics of John's metaphors.²⁰³ For instance, it is quite clear that John regularly uses metaphor as means of characterization.²⁰⁴ How he does this

²⁰² The choice of supersession is intentional. It recognizes that there is debate, particularly with respect to the proliferation of individual narratives in medicine, psychology, social science, and social media, regarding the truthfulness of narrative as it relates to reality. Bamberg's excellent article is a fascinating window into this discussion, Michael Bamberg, "Who Am I? Narration and Its Contribution to Self and Identity," *Theory & Psychology* 21, no. 1 (2010). While one can debate whether truth exists, or is objective or perspectival, there is the assertion, even among those who believe in "truth" in the human experience, that many personal narrations are, in fact, recreations or redactions, of an individual's experience. Carr argues against this view, taking issue with Louis Mink and Hayden White, both of whom dismiss much of reality in narrative, claiming the plot structure, especially, transfers from art to life and not vice versa. Carr posits that narrative and reality are much closer than many wish to admit, David Carr, "Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity," *History and Theory* 25, no. 2 (May 1986). For a critique of efforts to understand one's life experience as a narrative text, which may not fully represent truth or reality, and which can be reductionist, minimizing the experience of life simply to a text, read Angela Woods, "Post-Narrative: An Appeal," *Narrative Inquiry* 21, no. 2 (2011). Here, one understands that the biblical narrative, particularly that of Revelation, assumes and asserts a truthfulness and authority based on God's existence, His character, and on His heavenly perspective, that is quite above any earthly perspective, see Revelation 3:7, 6:10, 15:3, 16:7, 19:2, 19:9, 19:11, 21:5, and 22:6.

²⁰³ There is a vast divergence of opinion and method in narrative studies. Any reflection undertaken here is at a practical level, covering commonly regarded elements of ancient and modern literary narratives. One will not endeavor an in-depth philosophy of narrative. Robert and Shenhav briefly introduce the problem of diversity and fragmentation in narrative studies, but also propose some common assumptions that one can follow when undertaking narrative studies in Dominique Robert and Shaul Shenhav, "Fundamental Assumptions in Narrative Analysis: Mapping the Field," *The Qualitative Report* 19, no. 38 (September 2014).

²⁰⁴ Revelation 1:8 includes an instance of a character's self-disclosure, where God calls himself "the alpha and omega." 1:20 includes two metaphors of characterization, "the seven stars are the angels," and "the seven lampstands are the seven churches." 5:5-6 include further metaphorical characterization of Jesus as both Lion and Lamb. Revelation 11:4 writes of the two witnesses as two olive trees and two lampstands. 12:9 includes a metaphorical description of the devil or Satan, as a great dragon and an ancient serpent. In a delayed metaphor, 16:13 identifies the beast from the earth, first introduced in 13:11, as the false prophet. In the case of the two witnesses and the false prophet, Reinhartz' seminal work on anonymity in biblical characterization, though focused on OT narrative, is helpful in understanding their potential roles in plot development and in amplifying the named characters around them, Adele Reinhartz, *"Why Ask My Name?" Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative*. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

and why,²⁰⁵ as opposed to his use of metaphor in other narrative aspects, like narration in action sequences or setting, is worthy of some attention.

Furthermore, one wonders if John's metaphors are a means of bridging the spatial and temporal divide between heaven and earth and God and his saints.²⁰⁶ Since the apocalyptic genre, to say nothing of prophetic text-types, regularly relies on figurative means of communicating, one must consider why it uses metaphor, simile, allegory, and symbol, among others, to convey its narrative message.

One argues here that this is partially due to the content of apocalypses as defined above. That is, apocalyptic narrative describes an otherworldly journey, where an author encounters otherworldly beings and otherworldly geography. This is, presumably, beyond the normal experience of the author and the audience.²⁰⁷ Correspondingly, the author uses analogical or figurative language to describe his awesome visions and encounters in some way that makes them meaningful for the audience.

Thus, apocalyptic or revelatory literature demands that the author not only communicate in figurative language, but in familiar language. If the analogies, symbols, allegories, metaphors,

²⁰⁵ It is likely, for example, that metaphorical characterization advances the suspense of the plot in some way as it draws the audience into the story.

²⁰⁶ In writing of a divide, one is mindful of N.T. Wright's dichotomy between duality and dualism. He writes of heaven and earth being "two different *dimensions* (emphasis his) of the total reality of the world ... which interlock and intersect." This he calls duality. Dualism, he cautions, is seeing heaven and earth as separate and that earth is "shabby or second-rate and the non-physical [heaven] somehow morally superior." See Nicholas T. Wright, *The Millennium Myth*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 35-37. One would understand the heaven earth divide here, as duality not dualism, but there is still a divide or a difference in the dimensions. That other scholars use the two terms interchangeably is seen in David Flusser and Azzan Yadin, "The Dead Sea Sect and Its Worldview," in *Judaism of the Second Temple Period: Qumran and Apocalypticism* (Grand Rapids, MI; Jerusalem: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2007), 1. Here Flusser writes that the "sectarian texts found in the Judean Desert" are "based on a doctrine of dualism which divides the world into two warring factions: the faction of light and the faction of darkness." He then states, "... every divine act is guided by this duality."

²⁰⁷ John J. Collins, as noted above, has outlined the most definitive, though not universally agreed upon, description of the apocalyptic genre, including the otherworldly elements, Collins, "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre," 5-7. Werline writes a brief, yet lucid, introduction to Revelation in its apocalyptic milieu, in Rodney A. Werline, "Revelation and Apocalyptic Tradition," *Leaven* 8, no. 1: Revelation in Perspective.

or similes are absurd and beyond the experience of the audience, the message is unknowable and the otherworldly experience of the author remains inaccessible. Since apocalyptic means "to reveal" or "unveil," such incongruity defeats the purpose of the revelatory communication; it would not reveal but rather conceal.

In the apocalypse, John ascends into heaven and encounters a God and a heavenly realm beyond human experience and comprehension. Yet the task remains for him to communicate his vision to an earthly audience. As the two realms converge, the use of metaphor and figurative language is necessary and a revelation or unveiling of a heavenly God to an earthly audience takes place.²⁰⁸

This use of figurative language relates not just to the fact that Revelation contains an otherworldly journey. It inescapably weaves into the fabric of narrative. While many scholars and Bible students might think of poetry as the soil of figurative language, one must not exclude narrative from figural language use. Adele Berlin, in her seminal work on narrative, writes that "narrative is a form of representation," and that one "should not confuse a historical individual with his narrative representation," and finally, that "representations of reality do not always correspond in every detail to reality."²⁰⁹ As John's narrative attempts to present a representation of reality, metaphor is critical to the blending of the representation and the real for John's

²⁰⁸ It is notable that the perspective of the Book of Revelation seems to be that while the heavenly can see and understand that which is taking place on earth, the earthly struggles to recognize and comprehend the heavenly.

²⁰⁹ Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 13-14. She includes a helpful comparison with art, stating that while individuals have no problem recognizing that a painting of an apple is not a real apple, they somehow struggle to differentiate between the real and representative in biblical narrative. This is not to say that what the narrative represents is not historical or did not exist, but that the narrative merely represents the real. White's brief article, though it has serious drawbacks for the student of ancient biblical narrative, is a valuable tool in understanding how narrative and "narrativizing discourse" in the modern era conceive of real or true events, Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1980).

audience. Metaphor is quite suited to describing representations of reality that might otherwise be absurd if one slavishly understands narrative as “real,” or literal.²¹⁰

1.2.5 *Apocalyptic Purpose*

As one argues above, specifically with respect to the work of Thompson, genre must include a discussion of communicative purpose.²¹¹ This is particularly true if some genres include more figurative language than others do as it relates to how hearers or readers process figurative language, especially metaphor. While this dissertation is not concerned with speech-act theory, some of its proponents have articulated that people understand utterances better, including figurative language, when they understand the purpose and goals of other discourse participants, in this case, the author or speaker.²¹² This means that understanding the communicative purpose or purposes of John’s genre may aid the reader or hearer in comprehending his metaphors.²¹³

However, when engaging the multiple theories surrounding the purpose and function of apocalyptic literature, disagreement abounds as to what the purposes or functions of the Apocalypse are, which is, in part, why the genre is difficult.

²¹⁰ Bullinger’s older tripartite division of comparisons is intriguing at this point, given the use of the word representation regarding metaphor. His three types of comparison are simile, which is comparison by resemblance, metaphor, which is comparison by representation, and hypocatstasis, which is comparison by implication, Ethelbert William Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. (London; New York: Eyre & Spottiswoode; E. & J.B. Young & Co., 1898), 748.

²¹¹ Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 42. A debt goes here to Stewart, whose work one read long after interacting with Thompson, for pointing out that David Hellholm proposes to expand Collin’s classic definition of apocalypse to include function, Alexander E. Stewart, “Soteriology as Motivation in the Apocalypse of John” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 2.

²¹² Richard M. Roberts and Robert J. Kreuz, “Why Do People Use Figurative Language,” *Psychological Science* 5, no. 3 (May 1994): 159.

²¹³ Aune includes a thoroughgoing assimilation of many of the components noted here in apocalypse, including apocalyptic purpose, David E. Aune, “The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre,” in *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008).

One such disagreement in defining apocalyptic purpose results as some authors seek apocalyptic purpose only in Christian terms excluding an examination of continuity or discontinuity with Jewish apocalyptic, not to mention other possible traditions sharing apocalyptic worldviews. It is not hard to understand how this happens as the Book of Revelation is the paragon of the genre and it is Christian in its orientation. There must be allowance for some distinction in broad apocalyptic purposes, and the more specific or unique goals of each Apocalypse, including the Christian Apocalypse.

Mangina, for instance, in writing in a commentary series devoted to the Nicene tradition of Christianity, is one who defines apocalyptic in only Christian terms.²¹⁴ He does this when he affirms Harink's definition of apocalypse, writing, "'apocalypse' is shorthand for Jesus Christ,"²¹⁵ and while later writing about New Testament apocalyptic, does not clearly distinguish New Testament apocalyptic from the broader category of apocalyptic literature. This is problematic since he begins his treatise writing about how modern readers interpret the word apocalypse and contrasts it with what he believes is a Christian perspective – that apocalypse is about how "God has acted ... in the life, death, resurrection, and coming again of Jesus."²¹⁶ One would prefer to begin with a broader perspective of the purpose of apocalyptic in the ANE, specifically Judaism and Christianity, and then write about how John may have chosen, given his other options, to adapt a broader genre for his own Christian purposes.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ In so doing, he demonstrates at least one of the weaknesses of an avowedly dogmatic hermeneutic regarding the purpose or function of Apocalyptic, that is, the tendency to see only through that spectrum. By not examining apocalyptic literature across other religions, ANE contexts, or literary traditions, it limits the definition of Apocalyptic to a comparatively small corpus, namely John's Apocalypse, and functionally denies the phenomenon of Apocalyptic as more widespread. This is not to disparage Mangina's adherence to the Nicene tradition, just to affirm, especially given the editor's preface, that all positions have weaknesses. In this case, as is seen later in his work, he defines apocalyptic only in terms of a Christian perspective and only with respect to the Book of Revelation. Apocalyptic, as a genre, is much broader than this.

²¹⁵ Mangina, *Revelation*, 25.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Collins also notes the tendency of Christian scholars to focus solely upon John's Apocalypse to the exclusion of other similar works, when discussing genre and purpose,

In this broader perspective on apocalyptic purpose, Yarbrow Collins and others, recognize the assertion made previously here that definitions of genre should include some discussion of function. Thus, she writes with acknowledged help from David Hellholm and David Aune, that an apocalypse “intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances considering the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority.”²¹⁸

Ladd, although failing to include traditions other than Judaism and Christianity, writes that the major characteristic of apocalyptic is that “the secrets of the invisible world and of the future are disclosed,” and that the “chief interest” of apocalyptic books is the “solution of the problem of why the righteous are suffering, and when and how the deliverance of the kingdom of God will come.”²¹⁹ One takes Ladd’s chief interest descriptor here as a definition of apocalyptic purpose. If one leaves out the specific reference to God’s kingdom, it is possible that Ladd’s definition has broad merit when included with Yarbrow Collins, Hellholm, and Aune as above. The earthly circumstances of Yarbrow Collins could be the suffering of the righteous as described by Ladd.

Moving to the micro-level of John’s apocalyptic purpose, Yarbrow Collins supposes that letters to the seven churches indicate one of Revelation’s purposes is to address “conflict among the followers of Jesus in this region and rivalry among their leaders.”²²⁰ She further adds her belief that the context of the seven messages demonstrates “the followers of Jesus are in conflict

²¹⁸ Adela Yarbrow Collins, “Introduction,” in *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, ed. Adela Yarbrow Collins, Semeia (Decatur, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1986), 7. Murphy has a brief yet lucid introduction to the function of apocalyptic genre as he draws on Yarbrow Collins definition. He also notes that while it is often difficult to determine the social function and purpose of a genre, it is an informative process nonetheless, Frederick J. Murphy, *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World: A Comprehensive Introduction*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 5-6.

²¹⁹ Ladd, “Why Not Prophetic-Apocalyptic?,” 192.

²²⁰ Yarbrow Collins, “The Book of Revelation,” 390.

with their Jewish neighbors,” which leads to persecution and the admonition to remain faithful to the name of Christ.²²¹

Far more likely than Yarbro Collins supposition of purpose at the micro-level of John’s Apocalypse, is that of Stewart, who writes that John sought to motivate his hearers “to reject idolatrous compromise with the surrounding cultural and political institutions and overcome through repentance, worship, witness, perseverance, and obedience.” His definition and later exposition of his argument supports this assertion, but one advantage he has over Yarbro Collins is that he does not limit the conflict in Revelation to a Jewish-Christian divide, but leaves room for the role of Roman contexts as well.²²²

Lastly, regarding the specific purpose of John’s Apocalypse, is David Barr’s compelling argument in “The Apocalypse of John as Oral Enactment.”²²³ Although he almost subconsciously conflates prophecy and apocalypse as his purpose is not to define genre, his argument and attention to the orality of the Apocalypse warrants serious attention for those seeking understanding of its message and use in early Christian *cultus*. He gives attention to the many images, places, and repetitions, particularly the three scrolls mentioned in the text, and argues that these are all for making the Apocalypse retainable.²²⁴ Its message must be retainable

²²¹ Ibid., 392-393.

²²² Stewart, “Soteriology as Motivation in the Apocalypse of John”, xii. Stewart’s work was later published as Alexander E. Stewart, *Soteriology as Motivation in the Apocalypse of John*. Gorgias Biblical Studies (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press LLC, 2015). Although he does not succinctly state what he believes the purpose of the Revelation to be, Harrington appears to follow Barr and Stewart as he writes that John is attempting to warn Christians not to compromise with Rome because the empire is “wholly evil.” He places emphasis on Revelation’s antagonism to Rome, quite the opposite of Yarbro Collin’s focus on Judaism, and highlights the Christian hope of ultimate victory, Wilfrid J. Harrington O.P., *Revelation*. ed. Daniel J. Harrington S.J., Paperback ed., Sacra Pagina, vol. 16 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 12-14. Bauckham similarly emphasizes the backdrop of Rome within the Apocalypse, noting it is “... a prophetic critique of the political idolatry and economic oppression intrinsic to Roman power in the late first century ...,” Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), xii.

²²³ Barr, “The Apocalypse of John as Oral Enactment.”

²²⁴ On the issue of retention, Gibbs, in citing several studies, writes that metaphors do aid in memory retention since “these expressions furnish conceptually rich, image-evoking conceptualizations,” Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., *The Poetics of Mind*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 133. If the nature of the Apocalypse is oral and its

because of its context, which, according to Barr, is liturgical and more specifically Eucharistic.²²⁵

This leads Barr to conclude, “The central theme of the Apocalypse, a focus of all three scrolls, is the proper worship of God.”²²⁶

Considering the covenantal language of Revelation 1:6 as it relates to Exodus 19:6, as one notes in the discussion of epistolary genre, one desires some combination of Stewart’s purpose with Barr’s purpose. One posits then that Revelation’s apocalyptic purpose could be to call its Christian audience to covenant faithfulness, worshipping the one, true God, through Jesus Christ, by rejecting idolatry, repenting, persevering, and obeying, all amidst persecution, tribulation, or crisis.²²⁷

language and structure are for reading and retention, as Barr notes, then it stands to reason, using Gibbs work, that John would employ metaphor as a means of memory retention, for both the readers and hearers.

²²⁵ Barr, “The Apocalypse of John as Oral Enactment,” 252-256.

²²⁶ Ibid., 255.

²²⁷ If, in fact, this is a reasonable definition of Revelation’s purpose, one can postulate as to why John may choose to use such a genre and figurative language. Gerrig and Gibbs, following Ted Cohen, suggest that “a main function of metaphor ... is the achievement of intimacy,” and, quoting Cohen, state this is achieved through a three phase process assumed in metaphor: “a) The speaker issues a concealed invitation, b) the hearer expends a special effort to accept the invitation, and c) this transmission constitutes the formation of a community,” Raymond J. Gerrig and Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., “Beyond the Lexicon: Creativity in Language Production,” *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 3, no. 1 (1988): 7. See also Ted Cohen, “Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy,” *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 8-12. Bowes and Katz support the idea of intimacy, which was first proposed by Cohen, demonstrating that although Cohen was a philosopher, that researchers have tested his hypothesis and found it to be defensible, Andrea Bowes and Albert Katz, “Metaphor Creates Intimacy and Temporarily Enhances Theory of Mind,” *Memory and Cognition* 43, (2015). This idea of intimacy is a valuable consideration. Commenting in the context of psycholinguistics, Horton recognizes, “Most ... research ... has focused more on the cognitive aspects of how figurative expressions are understood than on the interpersonal consequences of such expressions,” William S. Horton, “Metaphor and Readers’ Attribution of Intimacy,” *Memory and Cognition* 35, no. 1 (2007): 87. One theorizes that since John’s purpose is a call to worship God, through Jesus Christ, and all that this entails in a Christian community, that he uses metaphor to create intimacy among the recipients of his message. Conversely, Gerrig and Gibbs submit that “Intimacy can have negative consequences for listeners who do not share the necessary common ground with the speaker and listener,” and that “Creativity has a dark side: The intimacy it creates can serve as an agent of exclusion,” Gerrig and Gibbs Jr., “Beyond the Lexicon: Creativity in Language Production,” 8. Since John distinguishes between the saints (those inside his community) and those who dwell on the earth (those outside), it is possible to see that the substance of John’s message (which includes judgment for those who do not worship God through Jesus Christ, but who instead worship the dragon, the beast, and the image of the beast in chapter 13), as well as the figurative language of the Apocalypse, does intend both to include and exclude. Ted Cohen includes another dark possibility regarding intimacy, in that a speaker or author may draw near to another, creating supposed community by using metaphor, in order to deliver “a lethal and one-sided effect,” Cohen, “Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy,” 12. Could it be that some members of John’s audience suppose themselves to be insiders but John’s use of some metaphors delivers a lethal blow, that is, they are not insiders at all, as in the letter to Laodicea in 3:14-23? Although their discourse goal taxonomy seems somewhat arbitrary, Roberts and Kreuz provide other possible reasons to use metaphor and figurative language in Roberts and Kreuz, “Why Do

This combined definition allows for some continuity with prior Jewish influences in that they call for the worship of the one, true God, by rejecting idolatry,²²⁸ and it reflects the necessary discontinuity with prior Jewish influences, in that includes Jesus Christ.

1.3 Method

Having noted the genre and its potential influence on the language of The Apocalypse, one now attempts to discuss, in general, the need for metaphors in biblical communication, and then, particularly, to define one's terms and articulate a method of interpreting linguistic metaphors in Revelation.

When writing about the majesty of God, Pannenberg notes, "Any intelligent attempt to talk about God – talk that is critically aware of its conditions and limitations – must begin and end with confession of the inconceivable majesty of God which transcends all our concepts."²²⁹

Whether one agrees with Pannenberg, his words and subsequent writing on how one conceives of the inconceivable, represent something like what the early biblical authors and readers faced,²³⁰ particularly with respect to the Apocalypse. It purports to be a revelation of Jesus Christ from God and yet such a revelation is difficult given the finite nature of the audience.

Revelation further places God and Jesus in the heavenly realm and the audience is earthly. Thus, not only is it difficult for humans to grasp the concept of God as presented in the

People Use Figurative Language." For more on tribulation or suffering as part of Revelation's purpose, see Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 171.

²²⁸ See Exod. 20:6, Deut. 6:4-25.

²²⁹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*. 3 vols., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 337.

²³⁰ This is not to say that modern readers do not face the same problem, which is part of what Pannenberg addresses.

Apocalypse, but for John's audience, the divide between God's dwelling place in heaven and humanity's position on earth is a vast gulf.

If one accepts Collins definition of apocalypse stated previously, then one understands the difficulty of grasping the intertwining nature of Revelation's two realities, the heavenly and the earthly.²³¹ How does an author or a reader whose dwelling place, experience, and very existence are earthly, begin to write about, speak about, or conceive of that which is heavenly, and what is more, the God of both realms?²³²

²³¹ Gibbs postulates three functions for metaphors, the first of which is the "inexpressibility hypothesis," which means metaphors express ideas "that would be extremely difficult to communicate using literal language," Gibbs Jr., *The Poetics of Mind*, 124. This is, essentially, what one is stating here, the difficulty of expressing language about God and the heavenly realm, which John experiences in the Apocalypse. The other two functions Gibbs describes are the "compactness hypothesis," that metaphors provide a compact way of communicating, and the "vividness hypothesis," that metaphors provide a richer, more detailed image than literal language.

²³² Howell has an articulate description of the difficulty of speaking about God, and in turn, the language of God in the Bible, for the novice and expert alike. His brief examination of "The Problem of Religious Language" in three arenas, linguistics, epistemology, and theology, are quite good. He notes the struggle of the "capacity for language as a medium to communicate correct information about God," Brian C. Howell, *In the Eyes of God: A Contextual Approach to Biblical Anthropomorphic Metaphors*. ed. K.C. Hanson et al., Princeton Theological Monograph Series, vol. 192 (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock/Pickwick Publishers, 2013), 2-3. Furthermore, his succinct historical outline of Jewish and Christian approaches to equivocal, univocal, and analogous communication about God is valuable in understanding the way in which biblical authors and interpreters work to comprehend not only God but biblical material, *ibid.*, 4-18. Finally, while the nature of this work assumes descriptions and realities of God, which come from Jewish and Christian backgrounds as well as their literature, Bousthan and Yoshiko Reed generally recognize the same problem or issue exists in Late Antique Greco-Roman culture and religion as well. As with Judaism and Christianity, Greco-Roman thought, among others in Late Antiquity, assumed the reality of a heavenly god or gods, and the earthly reality and nature of humanity. How ancients mediated the two realities is the focal point of their work, see Ra'anan S. Bousthan and Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Introduction: 'In Heaven as It Is on Earth'," in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, ed. Ra'anan S. Bousthan and Annette Yoshiko Reed (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Graf, in the same work, writes on the symbol or metaphor of the river as a boundary to other realms and the need for a ferryman to cross it. He also writes of the ladder, hole, and most extensively of the bridge, where he curiously concludes, "The obvious alternative to a ferryman, a bridge, does not appear before the late sixth century CE, ... although bridges are much older in our world," Fritz Graf, "The Bridge and the Ladder: Narrow Passages in Late Antique Visions," in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, ed. Ra'anan S. Bousthan and Annette Yoshiko Reed (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 19. One might expect to see bridges as a metaphor sooner in the Common Era, but certainly not in the older myths that he addresses. Moreover, the oldest bridges were likely nothing more than culverts over small spans, not anything like a Roman bridge crossing a river, According to Taylor, the first recorded Roman bridge to span a river dates to 510 B.C. and would not be a factor in ancient concepts of crossing a river, such as those in Homer, Rabun Taylor, "Tiber River Bridges and the Development of the Ancient City of Rome," *The Waters of Rome* 2, (June 2002): 3. Moreover, as Taylor notes, even the Romans, for whom bridges were common, rarely mention them in literature, with one extended praise of bridges coming in the 4th century, *ibid.*, 1. Neither does Graf much account for the fact that the river seems to be a divide between the realms of the living and the dead and not in any way a place or object to mediate the realms of a living god and humans. Taylor affirms this, writing, "The Romans regarded rivers and streams as ominous barriers, perhaps separating the living and the dead," *ibid.*, 4.

Following Pannenberg, one understands there are numerous ways in which biblical authors attempt to mediate the divide between God and man, heaven and earth. Figurative language is one of the most pervasive ways in which this happens, and more particularly for this work's purpose, is the recognition of the reality and necessity of metaphor in the biblical corpus as one means of mediating the divergent realities of a heavenly God and an earthly humanity.²³³

Since metaphors are a reality and necessity for meaning in the biblical corpus, a method of research centered on theories of metaphor is essential and therefore one attempts here to follow a method that focuses upon defining metaphors and their use in John's Apocalypse.

De Villiers makes clear the necessity of such a method, when, although using the word symbolism, he states, "It may come as a surprise that the symbolic language of apocalypses is seldom the object of research."²³⁴ Not only are such studies scarce, no distinguishing definitions of figurative language, metaphor, symbolism, etc. exist in the literature regarding studies of Revelation. The study of metaphor here hopes to help fill this gap.

Modern theories of metaphor abound and the information from these theories is helpful in studying the biblical text and one uses them in this work. However, in attempting to understand how John mediates the divergent realities of heaven and earth through metaphor, it is important to let the Apocalypse's own words, syntax, and grammatical constructions communicate for themselves. There is little to gain from strictly imposing an overly modern construct of metaphor on this ancient text. One needs some combination of analyzing John's own constructs and attempting to understand them through the development of modern ideas regarding metaphor. For while it is true that anachronism is dangerous, it is also possible that modern theories of

²³³ Holt affirms the use of metaphor when speaking of God, writing, "When we talk about God, the absolute otherness, we have to talk tentatively, that is: in metaphor . . .," Else K. Holt, "Metaphor in Prophetic Literature," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 17, no. 1 (2003): 3.

²³⁴ Pieter G.R. de Villiers, "The Lord was Crucified in Sodom and Egypt," *Neotestamentica* 22, (1988): 125.

metaphor are simply articulating realities that have existed throughout history and across cultures, but which ancient authors had not yet expressed in such precise ways.

Although not dealing specifically with metaphor, Berlin supports the idea of approaching a text first. Following Todorov, she writes regarding the discipline of Poetics, "... it aims to find the building blocks of literature and the rules by which they are assembled."²³⁵ Furthermore, she writes that as a science of literature its recourse is only to literature and this is an "internal" phenomena, that is, "it seeks its rules and principles from within literature itself."²³⁶ While she recognizes that Todorov's approach can be isolationist, there is value in searching for the internal framework of a literary document without forcing upon it external sciences.

Borrowing from Berlin's assertion, one believes that by extension a search for the building blocks of metaphor within a literary piece begins from within the piece itself. One cannot and should not rule out references to linguistic sciences and literary features in other documents, and one should allow each composition to stand alone first.²³⁷

Berlin understands the discipline of poetics as different from that of linguistics, but not isolated from it.²³⁸ One cannot understand poetics apart from linguistics because literature uses language. That said, Berlin continues her discussion with the analogy of a cake, stating that if a cake is the literature or literary piece, the poetics "gives us the recipe and interpretation tells us how it tastes."²³⁹ If one follows Berlin's proposal, then searching for John's strategy of

²³⁵ Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 15.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

²³⁷ While one here writes of texts and readers, and in other places of hearers and readers, one does understand that there is a fundamental difference between the two, namely, as Ricoeur notes, that when speaking, a dialog or conversation can occur in which ideas may be clarified between the speaker and hearer, but that in "written texts, the discourse must speak by itself," Paul Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," *New Literary History* 6, no. 1, On Metaphor (Autumn 1974): 95.

²³⁸ She defines poetics as determining "the basic components of literature and the rules governing their use," Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 15.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

lampstand metaphor begins with an internal exploration of John's text and not by first imposing an external model.²⁴⁰

In so doing, it is evident from the outset that the Apocalypse not only reveals John's message, it reveals a part of John's literary strategy, or recipe, for how John communicates. In 1:1, the Apocalypse records that the angel signified, ἐσήμανεν, his message.²⁴¹ The implication is that the angel uses figurative language in the giving of the message to John, which John, in turn, records for his audience.²⁴² Beyond this reference, one finds the apocalypse filled with various forms of figurative language, such as metaphor,²⁴³ which, even if they do not justify the use of

²⁴⁰ One recognizes here, as does Berlin, that in using the analogy of a cake, this process is like starting in reverse. One has the cake and then must attempt to determine how it is made, *ibid.* Of course, the problem with this analogy, which Berlin does not address, is that one reconstructs the recipe of a cake also by how it tastes as certain ingredients possess distinctive tastes.

²⁴¹ Cameron's research indicates that English speakers and writers use "tuning devices," or signals, which generally appear in advance of metaphors "to help speakers activate metaphorical interpretation," Lynne Cameron, "Metaphor and Talk," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 202-203. Commentators have little to say regarding the fact that after John introduces the verbal form ἐσήμανεν, signified, he then uses the noun form σημεῖον, sign, seven times (12:1, 12:3, 13:13, 13:14, 15:1, 16:14, 19:20), consistent with all the other sevens in the text. The use of this noun creates a sense of the cosmic, prophetic conflict that John writes about since while God is revealing signs from heaven, the dragon and the beasts are also performing signs to deceive God's people. Beale goes so far as to conclude that the section of 12:1-15:4 consists of seven subsections, Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 621. However, one could construe this word as an instance of tuning. One also wonders whether εἶδον, I saw, appearing 56 times in Revelation, and ἀκούω, I heard, appearing 46 times, are tuning devices. It is clear John uses these in conjunction with the witness of 1:2, but it is unclear if he intends more. Beale does not use the terms "tuning devices" and does not fully separate instances of figurative language from instances of tuning, but he recognizes the concept when he writes of "Telltale signs of an author's intent to transgress word boundaries ..." Beale posits that when John writes, "as for the mystery of the seven stars," in 1:20 and "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt," in 11:8, that the words mystery and spiritually are key descriptive terms that "alert the reader to the presence of a comparative relationship," *ibid.*, 57.

²⁴² Beale includes a thorough examination of ἐσήμανεν in Revelation as well as its implications for understanding John's apocalyptic message; Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 50-69. Unfortunately, Beale contributes to the confusion regarding the nature of the Apocalypse by defining the uses of σημαίνω and σημεῖον as symbolism. Rather than asking whether or not one should understand certain aspects of the Apocalypse as literal or figurative, he asks whether they are literal or symbolic, Gregory K. Beale, "The Purpose of Symbolism in the Book of Revelation," *Calvin Theological Journal* 41, (2006). One will find, as below, that these are two very different questions. Hughes includes a brief discussion of the importance of the verb signified, arguing that its inclusion means that by nature, Revelation is "a book of signs or symbols ...", Hughes, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary*, 16.

²⁴³ Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, uses the word μεταφορά, metaphor, in proximity to σημεῖον, writing, "τὸ δὲ κύριον καὶ τὸ οἰκεῖον καὶ μεταφορὰ μόναι χρήσιμοι πρὸς τὴν τῶν ψιλῶν λόγων λέξιν. σημεῖον δέ, ὅτι τοῦτοις μόνοις πάντες χρῶνται· πάντες γὰρ μεταφοραῖς διαλέγονται καὶ τοῖς οἰκείοις καὶ τοῖς κυρίοις." Freese translates this "Proper and appropriate words and metaphors are alone to be employed in the style of metaphor; this is shown by the fact that no one employs anything but these. For all use metaphors in conversation, as well as proper and appropriate words ...",

1:1 as an interpretive model, can stand alone as evidence of the figurative nature of the Apocalypse.²⁴⁴ By extension, efforts to understand Revelation's figurative nature through literalistic means are prone to create the kind of inconsistent explanations noted previously.²⁴⁵ Therefore, one must follow some method of naturally understanding John's figurative language within his own social and linguistic context.

Attempts to interpret John's figurative language are fraught with pitfalls and one hopes not to add to the confusion, but one rather seeks to fill the lacuna in studies regarding the figurative language in the Book of Revelation. By defining terms and proposing a means of interpreting linguistic metaphors using these specific terms, one seeks to avoid the linguistic confusion surrounding Revelation, and minimize inconsistencies that arise from such confusion.

As a starting point, Van der Watt's dynamics of metaphor approach inspired this study and one makes an effort to analyze and make critical use of his definitions, even while expanding, changing, or diverging from them.²⁴⁶ One specific inspiration comes from Van der Watt's comments with respect to the Gospel of John, where he notes that scholars have applied numerous modern methods of interpreting John's figurative language, many of which risk

John Henry Freese, *Aristotle: The 'Art' of Rhetoric*. ed. E. Capps, T.E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York: William Heinemann; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), 352-353. The context in Aristotle, unlike the use of *σημείον* in many NT locations, seems to indicate a meaning similar to evidence, e.g. as evidence of the use of metaphors in good prose, everyone seems to use them. Furthermore, Aristotle goes on to argue that metaphor gives, *τὸ σαφές*, clarity, or as Freese translates it, perspicuity, *ibid.*, 355. Thus, one could argue that John's use of metaphors is a conscious part of his literary strategy as they help make clear his message, rather than obscure it.

²⁴⁴ One concurs with Deibler's assessment that metaphorical communication requires a "metaphorically competent speaker/writer who intends to speak/write metaphorically," and argue that the evidence suggests that John qualifies on both accounts, Timothy Alan Deibler, "A Philosophical Semantic Intentionality Theory of Metaphor" (Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 1989), abstract, 88-92.

²⁴⁵ Although like some traditions in Judaism, ancient and modern, which hope for a rebuilt temple, Dispensational efforts to literalize Revelation's temple images are inappropriate considering its genre and self-attestation. This is not to say that literal language plays no role in Revelation; literal language is often a requirement for making a comparison in metaphors and similes.

²⁴⁶ Jan G. Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*. ed. R. Alan Culpepper; Rolf Rendtorff, Biblical Interpretation Series, vol. 47 (Boston; Köln: Brill; Leiden, 1999).

unnaturally imposing a foreign theoretical system on the text.²⁴⁷ One attempts to be conscious of imposing a foreign theoretical system, while also understanding the impossibility of completely avoiding such a proposition, given the distance of time and inability to interact firsthand with the culture and speakers of the language.

Furthermore, following Van der Watt, one understands that such approaches similarly threaten anachronism, forcing later historical developments in theology and language theory upon John's ancient communication.²⁴⁸ With this caution in mind, one attempts to study John's Apocalypse, and the way in which his figurative language may function as it arises from his language and culture, while explaining this through theories and definitions, some modern but not necessarily anachronistic, in answering the questions of what, how, and why regarding his use of figurative language.²⁴⁹ Similarly, while this approach will make use of theories or constructions of metaphor universal to all languages, its focus is upon how John uses metaphor in the Greek text of Revelation.²⁵⁰ In this way, metaphorical constructions in John's Apocalypse, though similar, are not identical to those of other languages, particularly English.

²⁴⁷ The same is true for the Book of Revelation. For instance, some very fine commentaries begin with explanations of the common theological systems that individuals and traditions use, none of which existed in John's day. See, for instance, Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 44-49; Steve Gregg, *Revelation, Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*. (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), 2-3.

²⁴⁸ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, xx-xxi. Goulet appropriately quotes rhetoricians of John's era, or nearer John's era, such as Quintilian, in defining potential beliefs and practices regarding metaphors which may have influenced Jewish and Christian writings, Henri L. Goulet, "A Tale of Two Cities: Toward an Understanding of the Functions and Multivalent Meaning of the Metaphors 'Babylon' and 'New Jerusalem' in the Apocalypse of John" (2007). One must also clarify that this is not to say that use of modern thinking necessarily imposes on the ancient context but that one wishes to be sensitive to the possibility.

²⁴⁹ Here Van der Watt refers to a "use of minimum theory," and proposes this is a deductive, rather than inductive approach. Regarding the Gospel of John, he posits that "By carefully describing the way in which metaphors and other figurative elements are used in these extensive and complex collocations of metaphors, the basic elements of what could be called 'John's theory of metaphor' can be established," Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, xxi.

²⁵⁰ This dissertation does not focus upon metaphor density in John's Apocalypse; however, it is an area for further work. Cameron, presumably referring to American speakers, although the context is absent, proposes that metaphor density "ranges from around 20 metaphors per 1,000 words for college lectures to around 50 in 'ordinary discourse' and 60 in teacher talk," Cameron, "Metaphor and Talk," 199. Cameron articulates a formula for calculating

Finally, although the genre of the John's Apocalypse is dramatically different from the Gospel of John, one believes Van der Watt's deductive analysis of the syntax, grammar, and semantics of John's gospel metaphors, a process he calls dynamics of metaphor, provides a cogent method and the literary constraints necessary for understanding the Apocalypse's temple motifs.

As one states above, Van der Watt's process is a starting point. However, one uses this process critically, substantially diverging at points, particularly in its eclectic reliance upon modern theories of linguistic metaphor, to understand metaphors where no ancient explanation may exist. Nowhere is the difference starker than in the significant effort one makes in using Black's theory of associated common places, which one defines later. Comparisons will also reveal differences of opinion in defining some terms, and that while Van der Watt's work inspired this one, the author's conventions and eclectic methods are his own.

1.4 Terminology

The study of figurative language is *a priori*, a study of language.²⁵¹ Figurative language, whether spoken or written, communicates an idea, that is a substantive or an action, while referring to, or associating it with, another seemingly unrelated substantive or action. In terms of written language, the challenge for any reader is to determine the nature of the comparison. An author must use contextual and syntactical clues, in many ways predetermined by a specific culture or language, to hint that his language is figurative rather than literal. Apart from such

metaphor density with respect to metaphor in talk, but not in written texts. One could probably adapt this with reasonable effort.

²⁵¹ Certain aspects of Semiotics, to be sure, transcend the use of language and rely upon signs, such as traffic or road signs, which in turn rely upon social or cultural associations. In some cases, these signs may only be meaningful to a certain culture. In other cases, due to fundamental similarities or experiences of humanity which transcend language and culture, these signs may be more universal, i.e. bathroom or restroom signs, or the use of directional arrows.

clues, the reader is sure to miss the figurative nature of the communication. This is especially true of metaphors, the form of figurative language with which this work concerns itself.

Moran seems to affirm the above assertion as he writes of metaphors in written texts, which he calls literary metaphors.²⁵² He writes that the “networks of implications” surrounding literary metaphors are not discernable outside the verbal environment or a text or genre.²⁵³ This is acutely apt when examining the metaphors of dead languages, such as the Koine Greek of the New Testament. Since it is impossible to speak with a native biblical Greek language user, the study of metaphor in the New Testament and the Book of Revelation is ultimately literary and linguistic. One can only ascertain potential meaning by examining the extant literature and processing potential comparisons as noted above.

Ritchie follows a similar line of reasoning in his summary response to Vervaeke and Kennedy.²⁵⁴ While arguing that one must examine metaphors in both a “cognitive and communicative context,” he states that this “includes a detailed representation of the conversation and the participants’ prior experience with both topic and vehicle, and that this cognitive context guides the interpretation of metaphors...”²⁵⁵ Although one defines topic and vehicle below, here it is possible to emphasize his notation that both the conversation and prior experience are a part of the interpretative context. One emphasizes this here because the general approach one takes in this dissertation is linguistic rather than cognitive, arguing that the

²⁵² Richard Moran, "Metaphor," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998), 249. He contrasts literary metaphors, those found in actual texts, with “short, handy metaphors,” like those most theorists construct to fit their own studies.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ John Vervaeke and John M. Kennedy, "Metaphors in Language and Thought: Falsification and Multiple Meanings," *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 11, no. 4 (1996). Although, one must note that Ritchie does not fully agree with Vervaeke and Kennedy, nor would he likely agree fully with the approach taken here.

²⁵⁵ David Ritchie, "Common Ground in Metaphor Theory: Continuing the Conversation," *Metaphor and Symbol* 19, no. 3 (2004): 235.

semantic and syntactical construction of metaphors is the primary context in which one processes metaphor, and the experience of the context by readers or hearers, aids this.

This somewhat opposes Lakoff and Johnson,²⁵⁶ who seemingly argue that metaphor is an *a priori* act of the mind. However, a linguistic approach recognizes that one cannot fully understand figurative language meaning, and certainly not metaphor, apart from the linguistic, literary, or verbal environment in which one finds it and that understanding metaphor, rather often, is *a posteriori*.²⁵⁷

Returning to Moran, a significant implication of his assertion as it relates to the Book of Revelation is that a description and study of John's use of the syntax and semantics of Greek, or the verbal environment regarding his text and genre, is necessary. More specifically, when considering John's temple references, one should also include the entirety of John's verbal environment, particularly his metaphors, as these are the contextual clues or verbal environment a hearer or reader uses in interpreting the figurative message.

In some ways, this process of observing the dynamics of the metaphor, the poetic elements of the text, as well as the historical, social, and linguistic contexts, is what Mitchell

²⁵⁶ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980). Steen et. al. offer a refreshing critique of Lakoff and Johnson's approach, noting that researchers have carried out hundreds of studies based on the cognitive, a priori, approach to cognitive metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson and that few researches have paid attention to the fundamental criticisms of the Lakoff and Johnson approach, Gerard J. Steen, Aletta G. Dorst, J. Berenike Herrmann, Anna A. Kaal, Tina Krennmayr, and Trijntje Pasma, *A Method for Linguistic Metaphor Identification*. (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010), 1.

²⁵⁷ It may be possible to identify a decontextualized metaphor as metaphor, such as the man is a wolf. However, just what that means cannot be clear apart from context; the variables are too great. In the case of *a posteriori* comprehension of metaphors, the study of dead languages and metaphors again presents difficulty, because a modern reader has no personal experience of the original language or culture. In this way, even if one may be able to describe the meaning of the metaphor, its affective force may be different. The Pragglejaz group, in creating the MIP, or Metaphor Identification Procedure, explicate one of the problems common to many metaphor studies: the use of "isolated constructed examples," The Pragglejaz Group, "MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse," *Metaphor and Symbol* 22, no. 1 (2007): 1. Instead, they propose that scholars need to "explore 'metaphor in the wild' as speakers and writers produce it in varying contexts, *ibid*. Aaron, for his part, helpfully writes that, "... an intentionless, sensible utterance is not possible; that is, such a thing is an oxymoron," David H. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery*. (Boston; Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, Inc., 2002), 79.

describes in her discussion of the New Literary Criticism as it relates to scripture. Arguing against a supposed “inherited dichotomy between clearly demarcated ‘historical’ and ‘ahistorical’ methodologies,” she posits a unified methodology between both elements: “a shared commitment to a close reading of the exact wording and inner working of the text, and an understanding of the text as in some sense dynamic rather than static or fixed.”²⁵⁸ There is much of this commitment found in these pages.

When studying the figurative language of the Apocalypse and its verbal environment, it is also necessary to define carefully one’s terms.²⁵⁹ One proposes here to make a distinction between figurative language as the overarching category of non-literal language use, and its many subcategories, such as symbol, allegory, metaphor, and so on.²⁶⁰

An author using figurative language has many separate, but related techniques at his disposal. According to Richard Young, no less than sixteen different examples figurative language styles may appear in the New Testament, such as simile, metaphor, metonymy,²⁶¹ synecdoche, personification, and anthropomorphism.²⁶² While this work cannot deal with all of

²⁵⁸ Margaret M. Mitchell, "Rhetorical and New Literary Criticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, ed. J.W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 617.

²⁵⁹ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 1-24. Debate exists on these definitions and the philosophical arguments for them continue *ad infinitum*.

²⁶⁰ One will not discuss idiom in this work, but Moran includes a simple distinction between idiom and metaphor, Moran, "Metaphor," 249-251.

²⁶¹ Young defines metonymy as “the substitution of one word for another with which it is associated,” using the example of “The White House vetoed the bill,” where White House substitutes for the President. He offers a helpful biblical example from Luke 16:29 where Jesus says, “They have Moses and the Prophets,” where both Moses and Prophets refer to the scriptures, Richard Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 237. Gibbs, in his six guidelines for metaphor research, includes as his second guideline the need to distinguish metonymy from metaphor, Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., "Researching Metaphor," in *Researching and Applying Metaphor*, ed. Lynne Cameron and Graham Low (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30. In another place, Gibbs additionally includes helpful examples of metonymy as distinguished from metaphor, Gibbs Jr., *The Poetics of Mind*, 106-107. E.g. “The ham sandwich is getting impatient for his check,” “There are 20,000 uniforms in the city,” and “John fired the tuxedo because he kept dropping the tray.” The ham sandwich example Gibbs takes from Lakoff and Johnson, Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 35.

²⁶² He also includes synecdoche (the use of the whole for a part), ellipsis/aposiopesis (omission of words requiring interpretive implication), euphemism (substituting less offensive words for harsher ones), litotes (asserting something by negation), hyperbole (exaggeration), meiosis (deliberate understatement), irony (what is meant is the

these types of figurative language as it is primarily concerned with metaphor, defining at least some of these critical terms and describing their use as they relate to or contrast with metaphor is imperative to the process of examining the Apocalypse's metaphors, particularly as little consensus exists as to what many of these terms mean *prima facie*.

1.4.1 Imagery

An image within a biblical book or context is, according to Van der Watt, “understood as the (total and coherent) account, or mental picture of objects, with corresponding actions and relations, associatively (and thematically) belonging together.”²⁶³ He continues later in his work writing, “Any number of metaphors, comparisons, functional descriptions might therefore be included in the imagery in order to form the whole picture ... As soon as the action, relation or objects change, a new imagery follows.”²⁶⁴ For instance, John may use numerous metaphors, similes, and symbols that all individually refer to the temple, its parts, or its liturgy, such as the Ark of the Covenant and the Altar of Incense. The sum of these individual components scattered throughout Revelation work together to form an overall image of the temple. The same could be

opposite of what is said), hendiadys (expressing one idea with two or more similar words, usually separated by conjunction), epizeuxis (repetition of same words for emphasis), chiasmus (a series of two or more elements followed corresponding elements in reverse order), and anacoluthon (breaking off a sentence, leaving it incomplete, and starting a new one), Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 235-244. Kittay, while recognizing other aspects of figurative language, elevates metaphor to the extent that she asserts, “... metaphor is not merely one ‘among endless devices’: it is the paradigmatic device for pointing out analogies and making comparisons which cross the bounds of our usual categories and concepts,” Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 19.

²⁶³ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 18. This definition is significant in that it writes of a “mental picture of objects.” Kittay, following Richards, understands that imagery is primarily a visual term, Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, 23. Not all metaphors are visual in nature, necessitating the distinction.

²⁶⁴ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 137-138.

true of an individual *pericope*. It is not that all the figures point to the same realities or all used consistently to point toward one meaning, but they commonly share the temple.²⁶⁵

Concurring with Warren and Wellek, Van der Watt notes that imagery may be descriptive or metaphorical, and when it is metaphorical, that it may both present and represent at the same time.²⁶⁶ One may also say that a metaphor is both denotative and connotative. Thus, in the case of the Apocalypse, it is possible that the temple imagery may refer to the literal temple, as presented or denoted, or it may represent or connote something altogether different. An exploration of John's use of metaphor provides the literary context in which one may understand that his temple imagery is, in fact, metaphorical rather than simply descriptive.

Furthermore, Van der Watt notes that this imagery may be static or dynamic, stating that dynamic imagery is "a row of actions taking place within the boundaries of one image which organically belongs together."²⁶⁷ By way of example, he postulates that a "cow eating grass" is static, whereas "a cow eating grass then walking to the house to be milked before nightfall" is dynamic. Dynamic imageries, then, because they contain more actions and events, are more complex.

²⁶⁵ Robert Briggs' title is somewhat misleading as his work never fully defines imagery, addresses theories of imagery or metaphors, or seeks to define how Revelation's temple imagery fits together as the sum of its various temple components. Rather, the stated goal of his work is a background investigation to show that the Old Testament is the seed-bed of John's inter-textual allusions; Robert Briggs, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation*. (New York: Peter Lang, 1999). Nearly identical to Briggs in overlooking the necessity of defining imagery and distinguishing it from metaphor and symbolism is Chan Lung Pun Common, "Analysis of the Theological Implications of the Lamb Metaphor in the Book of Revelation" (Th.M. thesis, Trinity International University, 2004). Quek's thesis on the Eden-Temple is an otherwise outstanding work, but it too uses words like motif, imagery, symbolism, and icon without distinction, although it does demonstrate a minimal understanding of metaphor, Tze-Ming Quek, "The New Jerusalem as God's Palace-Temple: An Exegetical Study of the Eden-Temple and Escalation Motifs in Revelation 21:1-22:5" (Th.M. thesis, Regent College, 2004). Exemplifying greater sensitivity to metaphors, though without distinguishing it from imagery, etc. is Choy, "'Temple of the Living God': The Transformation of a Metaphor and Its Application in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Christianity".

²⁶⁶ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 18-20.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

One here asserts that the image of temple in the Book of Revelation is dynamic, based on a significant series of actions closely associated with the structure of the Jewish temple, its priesthood, cultic activity, and liturgy, and how these are represented figuratively, and especially metaphorically within Revelation.

On the issue of imagery, and its complexity, Van der Watt, following J.P. Louw, argues against secondary readings of texts. With respect to metaphor and imagery, Louw writes, “secondary reading involves a new frame of reference not substantiated by the restrictions of the text.”²⁶⁸ Such an assertion is only logical with respect to images and metaphors given that they are highly governed by the context and co-text in which they appear.

Van der Watt develops this idea further stating that the reader “has a limited amount of freedom when it comes to the interpretation of images.”²⁶⁹ It is clear in his work that he does not advocate unconstrained and open readings of the images of John 15, John’s Gospel, and by extension, the images of other biblical passages. This is because the author’s message would be lost. It also appears that Van der Watt believes that reading an image within the constraint of the message is necessary because the author is making a truth claim, at least in the case of John’s Gospel.²⁷⁰ One concludes that a careful approach to images is needed because to read an image openly is to change, ignore, or falsify a possible truth claim in the text.

Van der Watt also offers a helpful reminder, stating that the message of the author has priority over the image and the form of the image and in this way, “the message determines the way in which he [an author] uses the image.”²⁷¹ The reason an author uses so many different

²⁶⁸ As quoted by Van der Watt, *ibid.*, 143. For Louw, read Johannes P. Louw, “Primary and Secondary Reading of a Text,” *Neotestamentica* 18, (1984): 19.

²⁶⁹ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 147.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 149-150.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

images, metaphors, or other devices, is that he must be flexible to communicate a specific message.²⁷² The message allows an author to avoid forced, wooden, or “mechanical”

interpretations. Neither must every detail in an image “have an analogous counterpart.”²⁷³

Van der Watt posits that since the message has priority over the form of the image, that once “an image has served its purpose, it is abandoned, changed, or adapted.”²⁷⁴ This means that as an author progresses through a work, such as John in the Gospel of John, he may use an image like a door as a means of entering and exiting, but also which brings life.²⁷⁵ In this view, the author’s message brings constraint to the images, not the other way around.

1.4.2 Metaphor²⁷⁶

Academicians have expended tremendous amounts of time and energy attempting to define metaphor and no one definition captures their efforts, particularly concerning philosophically and linguistically competing theories.²⁷⁷ At its simplest, one can argue a metaphor involves a comparison, and that in making comparisons²⁷⁸, they seek to communicate

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid., 144.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 146.

²⁷⁶ A basic assertion of this dissertation is that metaphors are useful and their study is worthwhile. Abitor, in his dissertation proposing metaphor as bridging the divide in certain philosophies of science, contains a section on the rehabilitation of metaphor in which he notes that not everyone in history has been kind to metaphor, particularly with respect to Hobbes. He writes that Hobbes, “möchte die metaphor aus dem wissenschaftlichen Diskurs verbannen,” Daniel Abitor, “Metapher als Antwort auf Inkommensurabilität” (Doktorgrades der Philosophie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 2010), 6. Hobbes does not appear to like metaphor at all, not just with respect to scientific discourse, writing that it is an abuse of language and used to deceive people, Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*. (London: 1651), 20.

²⁷⁷ Gibbs is correct when observing, “Studying metaphors sometimes seems like an overwhelming experience.” He goes on to note that a substantial part of the problem is the capacious amount of literature, Gibbs Jr., “Researching Metaphor,” 29.

²⁷⁸ Note Carmac and Glucksberg, where they maintain that metaphors do not use existing associations between words, they create new ones, Mary K. Carmac and Sam Glucksberg, “Metaphors Do Not Use Associations Between Concepts, They Are Used to Create Them,” *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 13, no. 6 (November 1984). This appears to go against conceptual metaphor theory, which posits comparisons from existing cognitive categories on the basis of similarity.

truth.²⁷⁹ It is the nature of the comparison,²⁸⁰ and the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive environment in which one expresses it, that stirs debate.²⁸¹

Influenced by Ricoeur, this work understands that metaphors are comparisons utilizing figures of speech, or tropes,²⁸² which by nature involve words, that is, semantic and syntactic structures. These structures have variations in meaning and transcend the fixed, normal or literal usages common in the language and culture in question.²⁸³ As Young and Van der Watt both note, metaphors, while using comparisons, are not identical to similes, which use the words like

²⁷⁹ Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 236. Lakoff and Johnson, for their part, define metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another,” Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5. Stern asserts that few contemporary writers would disagree that metaphor communicates truth, Josef Stern, “Metaphor, Literal, Literalism,” *Mind & Language* 21, no. 3 (June 2006): 245-246.

²⁸⁰ It may be that comparison, interaction, or substitution, terms one defines farther down, are distinguishing features between metaphor and idiom. Davies, noting that many scholars see no difference between the two, argues that while one can ascertain meaning in metaphor through these processes, particularly of comparison, no such process exists for idiom. He defines idiom as “...a phrase which is conventionally used with a meaning different from its constructed literal meaning,” and that an idiom “has no semantic structure; rather it is a semantic primitive,” Martin Davies, “Idiom and Metaphor,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 83, (1982-1983): 68. That is, one acquires idiomatic meaning through practice of the language in a particular culture. One cannot reconstruct it based on comparisons, analogies, etc. For more on semantic primitives, see Anna Wierzbicka, *Semantic Primitives*. Linguistische Forschungen, vol. 22 (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1972).

²⁸¹ Davidson adds an artistic element to the interpretation of metaphors. He notes, “... all communication by speech involves the interplay of inventive construction and inventive construal.” Because of this invention, he continues by asserting, “There are no instructions for devising metaphors; there is no manual for determining what a metaphor ‘means’ or ‘says’; there is no test for metaphor that does not call for taste. A metaphor implies a kind and degree of artistic success...” Donald Davidson, “What Metaphors Mean,” *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (Autumn, 1978): 31.

²⁸² Fadaee articulates two kinds of figurative language: scheme and trope. Scheme focuses on form, “changing the ordinary pattern of words, like hyperbole, apostrophe, ellipsis, and antithesis.” Trope “changes the general meaning of words, like simile, metaphor, irony, allegory, satire, symbol, and paradox,” Elaheh Fadaee, “Symbols, Metaphors and Similes in Literature: A Case Study of ‘Animal Farm’,” *Journal of English and Literature* 2, no. 2 (February 2011): 19.

²⁸³ Paul Ricoeur, “The Semantics of Metaphor,” in *Paul Ricoeur on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. John Dominic Crossan, Semeia (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1975), 74-76. While understanding that metaphors work at a level of comparison, or analogy, this is not to say that the approach here is slavish to the “comparison view,” of metaphors. For instance, Glucksberg has demonstrated possible fallacies of the systematized approach to metaphor known as the comparison view, some of which are below, see Sam Glucksberg, “How Metaphors Create Categories -- Quickly,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Cherata, summarizing Wolff and Gentner, identifies three classes of metaphor-processing theories, “matching models, mapping models, a combination of the two: matching-then-mapping models,” Stefania Alina Cherata, “The Class-inclusion Theory of Metaphor: A Critical View,” *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics* XIII, no. 2 (2011): 130. The matching model is another description of the “comparison view.” However, while cognitive metaphor proponents argue against the idea that a person first processes the literal meaning of metaphor to arrive at something different, the work of Clark and Lucy indicates otherwise, Herbert H. Clark and Peter Lucy, “Understanding What is Meant by What is Said: A Study in Conversationally Conveyed Requests,” *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 14, (1975).

or as, in their comparison.²⁸⁴ As such, metaphors function differently not only at the linguistic level, but also at the cognitive level, though one might interpret regular comparisons and similes in much the same way.²⁸⁵

Glucksberg's tests differentiating similes from metaphors in the way people think and process demonstrates that similes evoke more literal, basic level comparisons. For instance, he uses the example of "some ideas are like diamonds," causing test subjects to interpret this statement in such ways as "some ideas are rare and valuable," and "some ideas are very valuable." These are more literal in their focus. Whereas turning the statement into a metaphor elicits responses such as "some ideas are insightful," and "some ideas are creatively very unique." Glucksberg rightly concludes that literal diamonds can be rare gems and valuable, but they cannot be insightful or creative. Thus, metaphors are not "vivid similes" and they "evoke more emergent properties than do similes."²⁸⁶

Drawing on the work of Max Black and Franz Guenther, Van der Watt records additional functions of metaphors beyond comparison: substitution, interaction, and climatic description.²⁸⁷

In the case of substitution, one can still recover the literal meaning of words even when the

²⁸⁴ Young's definitions regarding figures of speech are quite simple and do not involve the philosophical arguments behind them. However, his definitions are often sound; Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 236. Although Van der Watt's definitions are more philosophically robust, he arrives at similar conclusions, Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 15. As to the difference between simile and metaphor, Cherata may oversimplify when writing, "... the simile asserts that there is a similarity between two terms, whereas metaphor merely suggests it," Cherata, "The Class-inclusion Theory of Metaphor: A Critical View," 131.

²⁸⁵ For instance, Glucksberg and Keysar point out that while the comparison taking place in a simile can be reversed, "Metaphoric comparisons are fundamentally irreversible," Sam Glucksberg and Boaz Keysar, "Understanding Metaphorical Comparisons: Beyond Similarity," *Psychological Review* 97, no. 1 (1990): 4. It is an entirely different proposition or situation to write, "The man is a wolf," as opposed to "The wolf is a man." Cherata ostensibly agrees with Young and Van der Watt in that "metaphor and simile are "... not equivalent, although the interpretation of both relies to a certain extent on comparison, Cherata, "The Class-inclusion Theory of Metaphor: A Critical View," 131.

²⁸⁶ Glucksberg, "How Metaphors Create Categories -- Quickly," 75. For an additional critique of equating similes and metaphors, see Marga Reimer and Elisabeth Camp, "Metaphor," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language*, ed. Ernst Lepore and Barry C. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 851-852.

²⁸⁷ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 14-16.

metaphorical words or phrases substitute for the literal meaning of the words.²⁸⁸ By way of example, he proposes the LXX version of Psalm 79:9-18.²⁸⁹

In Psalm 79:9, the Psalmist describes a vine, which God removed from Egypt and planted in another land. Its roots spread, its branches provided shade, and it grew. Then, in verse 12, God breaks down the wall around the vine, passersby pluck its fruit, and boars from the forest ravage the vineyard.

In this Psalm, the author uses substitutionary metaphors. He exchanges the word vine for Israel, "You removed a vine out of Egypt." Van der Watt argues that, "the reader should 'move' between" the two worlds of Israel and the vine, where "the literal and figurative worlds are interrelated..."²⁹⁰ John's Apocalypse makes use of substitution regularly in its metaphors.

In metaphorical interaction, the constituent parts of a metaphor interact in such a way as to create a new meaning different from or independent of any of the individual components.²⁹¹ Van der Watt, in writing about the Gospel of John, believes John reserves the function of interaction for verbal metaphors.²⁹²

One of the most intriguing functions of Van der Watt's dynamics of metaphor model, at least as it relates to the Book of Revelation, is what he terms, "Climatic Description."²⁹³ He posits that this function is when multiple metaphors appear in a single co-text all referring to the

²⁸⁸ The Pragglejaz group make a significant point when writing of their research method regarding what does or does not constitute a metaphor. They note, "... any decision not to mark a word as metaphorical in context does not imply the word is being used literally," Group, "MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse." The reason for this is that the word may be some other form of figurative language that is not metaphor. For more on interaction, see Matthew S. McGlone and Deanna A. Manfredi, "Topic-vehicle Interaction in Metaphor Comprehension," *Memory and Cognition* 29, no. 8 (2001).

²⁸⁹ NRSV is Psalm 80:9-18.

²⁹⁰ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 121.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 122.

same idea. In other words, multiple vehicles may appear which have the same tenor or, multiple verbal metaphors all describing the same event.

Drawing again on LXX Psalm 79:9-18, Van der Watt believes that the “burning, uprooting, plundering and destruction of the vineyard,” do not refer to separate events but rather “emphasize the radical nature of the destruction.”²⁹⁴ He sees the same thing with respect to the boars, passersby, and wild animals who destroy the vineyard. They are all describing “the enemies of Israel.”²⁹⁵

In a NT text, he uses this to explain several instances in the Gospel of John. In John 10:9, Jesus uses a surface metaphor depicting himself as the gate for sheep and then says, “Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.” Van der Watt sees these three actions not as separate, but rather illustrating “the effectiveness of the door.”²⁹⁶

John 15:6 uses a surface metaphor designating Jesus as the vine. Those who do not abide in Jesus are like branches, which are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. Van der Watt explains that these three are cohesive and “dramatize the horror and impact of being thrown out.”²⁹⁷

The Book of Revelation likely uses many metaphors demonstrating climactic description, such as Rev. 6:12-14 where the sun became black, the moon became blood, and stars fell from the sky. All of which serve to highlight the great day of God’s wrath.

Finally, regardless of comparison, interaction, or substitution, or climactic description, authors express this meaning linguistically through relatively fixed syntactic and grammatical

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 117.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

constructions.²⁹⁸ As one explores below, the identifiable forms and patterns of metaphor use make identifying the functions simpler.

Moving from function to form, there are several guidelines to assist the interpreter in identifying the presence and form of metaphor in an utterance or written work. One begins with Kittay, who notes that metaphors are sentences and not isolated words.²⁹⁹ It is possible that even sentences are not adequate in determining metaphors because an independent, isolated sentence may not possess the necessary co-text or context to make it evident that a metaphor is present. One might interpret such a sentence metaphorically, but this does not make it so. Therefore, metaphors are sentences, whose co-text and context support a metaphorical understanding of the sentences.³⁰⁰

These sentences communicate comparison through tenor and vehicle and through focus and frame. Copulative sentences use tenor and vehicle to evoke comparisons, whereas non-copulative sentences use focus and frame. In copulative constructions, such as the man is a wolf, the tenor is the compared element or substantive that one can most readily interpret as literal, in

²⁹⁸ Ritchie argues that metaphors are subject to indeterminacy and that "How any particular speaker intends a metaphor to be interpreted, and how any particular hearer does interpret the metaphor, can never be absolutely determined," David Ritchie, "'Argument is War' - Or is it a Game of Chess? Multiple Meanings in the Analysis of Implicit Metaphors," *Metaphor and Symbol* 18, no. 2 (2003). However, one wonders if indeterminate meaning is really meaning at all.

²⁹⁹ Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, 23.

³⁰⁰ There is an inherent and inescapable circularity to metaphors, co-texts, and contexts. Metaphors render pieces of communication figurative, while the figurative nature of co-texts and contexts render certain sentences as metaphor; Deibler, "A Philosophical Semantic Intentionality Theory of Metaphor", 84. Black argues for a similar position when he writes of Churchill calling Musollini, "that utensil." While one can potentially understand such a statement as a metaphor, independent of circumstance, Black states that "the tone of voice, the verbal setting, the historical background, helped to make clear *what* metaphor was being used," Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), 29. See also David Ritchie, "Categories and Similarities: A Note on Circularity," *Metaphor and Symbol* 18, no. 1 (2003). Van der Watt is careful to reinforce the necessity of context in his use of the metaphor, "My Father is the gardener," from John 15:1-8. When decontextualized, this copulative does not immediately appear as metaphorical, particularly as it contains no obvious incongruity. However, within the context of John 15, it is unmistakably metaphorical, Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 12.

this case, man.³⁰¹ The vehicle is the compared element or substantive that is metaphorical, in this example, wolf.³⁰² Regardless of syntax, these two elements, explicit or implicit, compose a metaphor.³⁰³ Similarly, in non-copulative constructions, the verb that expresses the metaphorical element is the focus and the remaining words are the frame in which the focus appears.³⁰⁴

Recognizing, identifying, and interpreting the tenor and vehicle or the focus and frame of metaphor sentences in language is likely the practice that Gibbs calls “processing metaphoric language.” He distinguishes this from “metaphoric processing,” which indicates that a person

³⁰¹ Murphy uses the term “topic,” instead of tenor, Gregory L. Murphy, “On Metaphoric Representation,” *Cognition* 60, (1996): 175. One should not confuse the use of tenor and vehicle above, as well as Murphy’s use of topic for tenor, with Gundel and Fretheim as they write about subjects and predicates in discourse. They define topic as “what the sentence is about,” and focus as “what is predicated about the topic,” Jeanette K. Gundel and Thorstein Fretheim, “Topic and Focus,” in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 176. This is more in line with the idea of focus and frame.

³⁰² Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 18. Kittay, in an effort to provide definitions to the categories of I.A. Richards, is not nearly as explicit as Van der Watt in her explanations of tenor, vehicle, focus, and frame, Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, 16. Additionally, as Murphy and others note, the vehicle can have a literal meaning, but in order for the sentence to be metaphoric, one must “go beyond the literal, straightforward interpretation of the vehicle,” Murphy, “On Metaphoric Representation,” 175. Winner, et al., contends, “The two terms of the metaphor, the topic ... and the vehicle ... are neither identical ... nor hierarchically organized.” She continues to insist that these terms “must belong to two separate, nonhierarchically related categories,” Ellen Winner, Matthew Engel, and Howard Gardner, “Misunderstanding Metaphor: What’s the Problem?,” *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 30, (1980): 23. She does not explain what she means by hierarchical, whether this is conceptual, linguistic, etc. In the case of religious metaphors, one would have to argue against the idea of nonhierarchical categories with respect to metaphors dealing with ontological realities such as God. In such metaphors, at a theological and ontological level, God would be hierarchical to anything to which one compares him. Though they are not writing about God or religion, Markman and Gentner make use of the “ontology tree” that outlines and tests the effects of similarities and dissimilarities in comparisons with respect to ontological distance, which is different from semantic distance, which is discussed in this work as well. One result they discovered was that “mean-rated similarity decreased significantly as distance in the ontology increased,” Arthur B. Markman and Dedre Gentner, “Splitting the Differences: A Structural Alignment View of Similarity,” *Journal of Memory and Language* 32, (1993): 525. One expects this, however, since this deals with similarity and not directly with metaphor, although, as Ortony et al. note, “... satisfactory analysis of the nature of metaphor will have to invoke principles of similarity,” Andrew Ortony, Richard J. Vondruska, Mark A. Foss, and Lawrence E. Jones, “Salience, Similes, and the Assymetry of Similarity,” *Journal of Memory and Language* 24, (1985): 569. The incongruence and ontological distance in some metaphors likely aids processing. Gerard and Mandler, following Kiel, define ontological knowledge as “knowledge about classes of things.” They organize these classes into an ontological tree based on predicability, Anthony B. Gerard and Jean M. Mandler, “Ontological Knowledge and Sentence Anomaly,” *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 22, (1983): 105. Because all copulative metaphors have predicates, the use of the ontology tree may prove beneficial in examining the relationships between ontological classes.

³⁰³ Murphy calls the implicit connection between the tenor and vehicle “the ground,” although, as one notes above, he uses the term topic instead of tenor, Murphy, “On Metaphoric Representation,” 175.

³⁰⁴ Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 28.

may choose to read books such as *Snow White* or *Hansel and Gretel* with a metaphoric strategy “even though there is no special linguistic or textual material that is either metaphoric or motivated by metaphoric modes of thought.”³⁰⁵

In this processing of metaphors, a communicator or author does not often explicitly give the connection between the tenor and the vehicle or the focus and frame and the reader or hearer must interpret the meaning. One might identify something as non-literal, but exactly what comparison the author intends remains.³⁰⁶ One proposes here, again, that in biblical texts, this interpretation and meaning must come from the context, co-text, or inter-text, which constrains the interpretation both positively and negatively.³⁰⁷

For all speakers or authors and hearers or readers, successful communication of the metaphor, as constrained by the above variables, requires a “common understanding, an interpretation they both grasp.”³⁰⁸ By exploring the ancient context, tracing the use of words, sentences, and ideas throughout the biblical corpus, one can attempt to determine the meaning of John’s temple metaphors by testing linguistic, literary, and societal limits on how the author uses his words to create successful metaphoric understanding.

At this stage, it is imperative to reiterate the difference between this primarily linguistic understanding of metaphor from that of Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor. In their seminal work, *Metaphors We Live*, they state:

... metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in

³⁰⁵ Gibbs Jr., “Researching Metaphor,” 40-41.

³⁰⁶ So Murphy, “On Metaphoric Representation,” 181.

³⁰⁷ Murphy makes an important point when arguing against Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor. He argues that metaphoric sentences not only leave the comparison or similarity between tenor and vehicle ambiguous, but they also leave ambiguous to what they do not refer.

³⁰⁸ Josef Stern, *Metaphor in Context*. (Cambridge, MA; London: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2000), 2.

language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical.³⁰⁹

In this vein, the study of conceptual metaphor became a, if not the, dominate discipline in metaphor theory. It argues "... metaphor is not just a matter of language," but that, "... human thought processes are largely metaphorical."³¹⁰ Operating with this perspective, theorists hypothesize ways that the cognitive functions or thought processes, of the brain "map" metaphors by concepts apart from language, which are rooted in the human experience.³¹¹

Steen refers to this as "metaphor in thought" and defines conceptual metaphor as an attempt at "systematic mappings (sets of correspondences) between distinct conceptual domains," like "seeing knowledge as food (or ideas or understanding), movement, or perception."³¹² Kövecses more simply defines conceptual metaphor as "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain," giving the example that "life is a journey."³¹³

Rather than using terms like tenor and vehicle, focus and frame, as above, conceptual metaphor refers to these two domains as source and target domains. Using "The man is a wolf," as an illustration, in linguistic terms the tenor is the more literal of the words, "man," and the vehicle is the metaphorical word, "wolf." Conceptual metaphor defines the tenor as the target

³⁰⁹ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 3. Similarly, Ricoeur, referring to language rather than a conceptual system, follows I.A. Richards in arguing that metaphor is "the omnipresent principle of all its free action," Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*. trans., Robert Czerny, Kathleen McLaughlin, and SJ John Costello (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 92.

³¹⁰ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 6.

³¹¹ To be fair to Lakoff and Johnson, they affirm the necessity of context, including culture, in understanding metaphor. This is especially clear in their classification of orientational or spatial metaphors, and their chapter on metaphor and culture, *ibid.*, 14-24.

³¹² Gerard Steen, "The Language of Knowledge Management: A Linguistic Approach to Metaphor Analysis," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 28, no. 2 (March/April 2011): 181-182.

³¹³ Zoltan Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Second ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4. Frustratingly, theorists force the idea of life is a journey onto statements about life that do not clearly communicate this, e.g. Gibbs quotes a man who describes life, "as a straight line," further commenting, "it never ends." Gibbs insists the idea of a straight line is a journey, ignoring the mathematical or temporal possibilities as potential primary interpretations, Gibbs Jr., *The Poetics of Mind*, 120-121.

domain and the vehicle as the source domain. Therefore, in conceptual theory, “man” is the target domain and “wolf” is the source domain.³¹⁴ Thus, as Kövecses summarizes, “The target domain is the domain we try to understand through use of the source domain.”³¹⁵

The major pioneers of the theory, as mentioned previously, are Lakoff and Johnson and they famously write of the correspondence between argument and war, saying argument is war and that war is the way their culture conceives of argument.³¹⁶ They make it clear that one cannot comprehend the mapping process apart from culture, as they argue that one finds a culture’s primary values in its metaphors.³¹⁷ Other examples they give from their culture is that “More is better,” and they associate this spatially with “More is up,” and “Good is up,” thus, more is good and up is better.³¹⁸

In cognitive metaphor theory, theorists suppose that the preconceived, culturally conditioned conceptual categories of the brain, rather than linguistic creativity, account for metaphor. They also generally reject or diminish the idea of a primarily linguistic comparison as a means of metaphor identification.³¹⁹

While one may not inherently disagree with Lakoff and Johnson, among others, that metaphor may be a cognitive function of conceptual mapping in the brain, there is no verifiable way in which to study this apart from language and communication.³²⁰ One may think in terms

³¹⁴ Kövecses writes that the “conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain is called source domain,” and the conceptual domain that is understood this way is the target domain,” Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 4.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 4.

³¹⁷ That the culture of one’s language influences metaphor is an area of agreement across theories of metaphor.

³¹⁸ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 22.

³¹⁹ So Murphy, who summarizes the cognitive scholars’ view thusly, “Rather than seeing metaphors as being solely or even primarily a linguistic phenomenon, they have proposed as a mode of representation and thought,” Murphy, “On Metaphoric Representation,” 174.

³²⁰ Murphy concurs, stating, “One disadvantage in discussing metaphoric representation is that it is necessary to discuss verbal metaphor.” He refers to cognitive metaphor theory as metaphoric representation and he uses the term verbal metaphor where one here uses linguistic metaphor, *ibid.*, 175. He goes on to state his disagreement with Lakoff and Johnson, especially when addressing their opponents. He believes that they attempt to make their point

of metaphor, but until one communicates this linguistically,³²¹ there is no way to identify and then analyze the metaphor or metaphorical way in which one is thinking.³²² Due to this, Casasanto illustrates that arguments regarding conceptual metaphor often become cyclical whereby test participants often think metaphorically based upon the way in which their first language expresses a metaphor linguistically or conceptually.³²³ Even Kövecses, a proponent of conceptual or cognitive metaphor theory, may unwittingly express this circularity in writing, "... that in order to be able to suggest the existence of conceptual metaphor, we need to know which linguistic metaphors point to their existence."³²⁴

To express this conundrum metaphorically, it leaves one wondering which came first, the chicken or the egg, but in this case, the only verifiable substance is the egg. Kövecses continues in his work to state that one can only understand or construe meaning from metaphors if one understands the map behind them, or a set of systematic correspondences, such as seeing life in terms of a journey, or viewing social organizations as plants.³²⁵ For example, he notes that people speak of the branch of a bank. Branch would be a source domain and bank a target domain.

by arguing against an extreme position whereby people only interpret things literally. Murphy posits a middle ground which he calls, "structural similarity," *ibid.*, 179-180.

³²¹ Conversely, there are those individuals who rarely use metaphor in language and appear to be quite stern or "plain-spoken."

³²² Casasanto presents a lucid argument demonstrating that since conceptual metaphor theory primarily uses linguistic data for its conclusions, it is nearly impossible to validate its hypothesis. Furthermore, he also warns of the difficulties of inferring "the structure and content of non-linguistic mental representations based solely on linguistic and psycholinguistic data," Daniel Casasanto, "When is a linguistic metaphor a conceptual metaphor?," in *New Directions in Cognitive Linguistics*, ed. Vyvyan Evans and Stephanie Pourcel (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009), 127.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

³²⁴ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 4. Murphy has a relatively long and helpful critique of cognitive metaphor theory and its Whorfian circularity, Murphy, "On Metaphoric Representation," 183.

³²⁵ One of the criticisms of linguistic metaphor as cognitive theorists articulate is that people do not naturally process metaphor through comparison by rejecting literalness and accepting that it is figurative, or further, by cognitively sifting through the potential characteristics that the metaphor evokes. However, the theory that a person must be aware of the pre-existent, pre-linguistic, culturally conditioned cognitive conceptual categories is no less strenuous in its demands. In either system, competent communicators are necessary and the immediacy of meaning is not always apparent.

One of the difficulties with the bank illustration is that few English speakers, in their daily experience, are likely to think of a plant when thinking of bank.³²⁶ They simply think of a branch as another location of the bank, much like a franchise, and another location is not necessarily associated with plants, but rather geography. It is an example of a linguistically expressed and culturally accepted metaphor, which people understand quite apart from a conceptual map, so much so that it may no longer function as a metaphor. Just because one may use a linguistic metaphor, which may indicate a comparison, it does not mean the person has a complex system of conceptual maps from which he or she draws.

Furthermore, as Murphy points out, there may be no end to the mapping concepts that one would need to be able to access to interpret properly by using this theory. Cognitive maps may be static, but the sheer number of categories one would have to process could be overwhelming. In the instance of argument is war, he indicates that the conceptual metaphor theory “argues that people, objects, and events are themselves represented metaphorically.”³²⁷ Because of this, he argues that one would need to consider that the people in the argument are angry and then one would have to consider conceptual maps for anger and human emotions as well, leading him to wonder how many maps one could reasonably expect people to consider in communication.³²⁸

Additionally, a problem intimately connected to conceptual maps is the idea that these maps appear as fixed based on some *a priori* similarity or relationship a person makes between the two objects. However, as Medin, Goldstone, and Gentner demonstrate, the idea of similarity

³²⁶ Following Murphy, one also wonders, apart from context, which parts of the branch comparison people can exclude.

³²⁷ Murphy, "On Metaphoric Representation," 181.

³²⁸ Ibid., 181-182. Here Murphy also maintains that if the comparison, or what he calls a link, were a normal one, then one should expect to see “incorrect attributes of war ... routinely ... attributed to arguments.” Later in his argument, he asks a damning question, “What is to stop people from making inferences that are empirically incorrect about the target domain?” Ibid., 187.

is not static, but rather changes as an individual grows and matures.³²⁹ Similarity depends on knowledge and expertise of the things compared. Context, particularly linguistic context changes the way similarity occurs as well.³³⁰ One might also say that these features serve as constraints to the interpretation as well.³³¹

Thus, one really must process metaphoric language by working with tenor and vehicle, focus and frame, within the linguistic framework of metaphor, finding associated concepts within the context and co-text to determine meaning and processing possibilities.³³² This must be

³²⁹ Douglas L. Medin, Robert L. Goldstone, and Dedre Gentner, "Respects for Similarity," *Psychological Review* 100, no. 2 (1993).

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 260ff.

³³¹ In their work on analogy, rather than metaphor, although there are similarities, Holyoak and Thagard propose a theory of analogical constraint contending that "...analogical mapping can be viewed as a process of finding correspondences between elements of two structures ..." and this mapping "...is governed by constraints of three basic types ... structural, semantic, and pragmatic," Keith J. Holyoak and Paul Thagard, "Analogical Mapping by Constraint Satisfaction," *Cognitive Science* 13, (1989): 304.

³³² One potential exception to the linguistic model and in support of Lakoff and Johnson might be art, including sculpture. It is possible to imagine examples, such as the *lamassu* housed in the Oriental Institute of Chicago, as the product of the pre-linguistic, cognitive function of metaphor in the brain. In this way, the combining of a human head on a bull's body, which in turn has the wings of a lion, could be an artistic, rather than linguistic expression of metaphor. However, the endless possibilities as to what such a construction could mean, apart from context, could render any potential transactional communication as useless. Even the Chicago *lamassu*, found in a particular context about which history knows a great deal is still the source of endless debate regarding its function, Michael K. O'Malley, "Chicago's Assyrian Winged Bull: A Problematic Recent History, Briefly," *ESSAI* 9, (2011). What is more, linguistic data from the ANE, such as Daniel 7, shed light on such images, which bias modern understanding. Forceville goes further proposing the broader theory that metaphor is present in "... sounds, musics, gestures, even in touch and smell ..." Charles Forceville, "Metaphor in Pictures and Multimodal Representations," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 463. Regarding art, specifically pictures, Kennedy advances the idea that "pictures are prototypical art objects" and that pictures "use perceptual tactics that are realistic." He concludes that "violations of realism in art are readily taken to be metaphors," John M. Kennedy, "Metaphor and Art," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 447. A literal picture is one that is realistic and "uses devices as they are in standard practice," *ibid.*, 49. Kennedy's arguments do not convince one here on lines and contours as he seemingly argues that non-standard lines and contours indicate metaphor. Neither is one immediately convinced by Cienki and Müller on metaphoric gesture or Zbikowski on metaphor and music, Alan Cienki and Cornelia Müller, "Metaphor, Gesture, and Thought," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Lawrence M. Zbikowski, "Metaphor and Music," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). The authors here promoting gesture as a category of cognitive metaphor use examples of gestures that are so tied to linguistic data that they exhibit the same circularity of cognitive metaphor theory. They are unable to demonstrate that gestures are metaphorical apart from their inherent relationship to language. As with art, there appears some possibility with music, but people will assess the arguments Zbikowski presents for music representing human emotion through linguistic responses. Stern argues that metaphors are primarily semantic or linguistic mechanisms, and that the transfer necessary for meaning cannot apply to "pictures or other symbols," Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 302. See also Josef Stern, "Metaphors in Pictures," *Philosophical Topics* 25, (1977).

because it is not empirically verifiable what or how someone is thinking until or unless he or she expresses it linguistically. As prior linguistic experience shapes thoughts, it is simply best to examine metaphor as the linguistic level.³³³

Since one previously stated that managing anachronism is a concern in studying dead languages, a linguistic approach is also best in that one cannot survey ancient speakers to determine if any cognitive maps exist apart from language. Priming experiments are not possible.³³⁴ It is not possible to determine whether the dead thought of life as a journey or of knowledge as food apart from literary and linguistic conventions.

One also favors the processing of metaphor through primarily linguistic means because it provides constraint. The conceptual mapping or cognitive metaphor theory presents subjective and endless possibilities of potential domains for which there is no constraint. Scholars have yet to determine or agree upon categories or domains, which may or may not exist, within languages or cultures, and that are inherently associated with target and domain structures. The possibilities

³³³ Valenzuela and Soriano are quite aware of the problem of circularity in Cognitive Metaphor Theory, noting it is, "... crucial to distinguish between conceptual metaphors and their linguistic manifestations," Javier Valenzuela and Cristina Soriano, "Looking at Metaphors: A Picture-Word Priming Task as a Test for the Existence of Conceptual Metaphor," *Barcelona English Language and Literature Studies* 16, (2007): 2. They argue they have solved the problem of circularity with their picture-word priming test, but one disagrees. Their own article appeals to linguistic and semantic data, specifically at the top of page 4. One believes they underestimate the strength of Murphy's objections. Furthermore, any test that uses words to determine primary cognition concepts is by default circular. Additionally, objections include the following: The test subjects appear to be Spanish-speaking adults and there is no effort made at tracking the comprehension of an individual from childhood through adulthood, which encapsulates the primary non-linguistic experience in a person's life and later linguistic competence. This is necessary because adults have already become competent language speakers, and the homunculus, as Murphy calls it (assuming this is the little man in the brain as used in psychology), self-talks or processes using language. Cameron asserts that there is a gap between "discourse evidence," or linguistic metaphor, and cognitive metaphor, and concludes, "... the gap may even be epistemologically unbridgeable," Cameron, "Metaphor and Talk," 207. Finally, even though Valenzuela and Soriano use pictures in their test, showing pictures with no apparent semantic equivalent in Spanish to adults, and then having the adults connect the picture to corresponding words. As this author notes above concerning art, this test is a step in the right direction of testing, but it needs to start earlier in a person's life and it should contain pictures mapped to pictures or something of the like. To this author, it seems that only tests that do not use any words can fully avoid the linguistic circularity approach.

³³⁴ As in the one Valenzuela and Soriano implement in a noble effort to vitiate charges of circularity as discussed above, Valenzuela and Soriano, "Looking at Metaphors: A Picture-Word Priming Task as a Test for the Existence of Conceptual Metaphor."

of such categories, as Murphy notes above, become so endless as to render metaphor nonsensical.³³⁵ In another place, Murphy has also asked critical questions concerning the conceptual map theory of metaphor, including, “What exactly are the metaphorical concepts? How are they structured?” and “How do people choose among different possible metaphors on any given occasion?”³³⁶ There must be some way to constrain word meaning to avoid meaninglessness and one has proposed contextual and co-textual boundaries as the constrainers. A context and co-text constrain the metaphor and provide the basis for its use and meaning.³³⁷

Stern supports this position in addressing Empson, Cavell, and Davidson. He summarizes their positions on metaphors as presenting endless and inexhaustible meaning to a particular metaphor, even within a specific context.³³⁸ However, he argues, “... in each respective context,

³³⁵ Murphy rightly brings up the issue of children in his critique of conceptual metaphor theory. Citing Ackerman, he asserts that if cognitive processes were inherently metaphorical, one should see this developed in a child as early as three years or four years of age, but even at the ages of six to eight years, Ackerman’s studies demonstrate that children are unable to identify idiomatic meaning correctly. If cognition and not language, were the genesis of metaphor, children should be able to understand language about metaphor, Murphy, “On Metaphoric Representation,” 191-192. Although Ackerman addresses idioms, he notes Clark’s assertion that idiom comprehension is not different from other forms of figurative language, Brian P. Ackerman, “On Comprehending Idioms: Do Children Get the Picture?,” *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 33, (1982): 440. For Clark, see Clark and Lucy, “Understanding What is Meant by What is Said: A Study in Conversationally Conveyed Requests; Herbert H. Clark, “Responding to Indirect Speech Acts,” *Cognitive Psychology* 11, (1979). Winner, et al., contend, “...children exhibit considerable difficulty in comprehending linguistic metaphor,” Winner, Engel, and Gardner, “Misunderstanding Metaphor: What’s the Problem?,” 23. For more on children, read Ralph E. Reynolds and Andrew Ortony, “Some Issues in the Measurement of Children’s Comprehension of Metaphorical Language,” *Child Development* 51, no. 4 (December 1980).

³³⁶ Gregory L. Murphy, “Reasons to Doubt the Present Evidence for Metaphoric Representation,” *Cognition* 62, (1997): 101.

³³⁷ Ortony et al. confirm that when respondents have an especially long context that directs readers to metaphor, it aids in processing. In the case of the Apocalypse, since John develops metaphors early and often in his text, readers should gain competence and speed as they read due to previous experience with John’s metaphors, Andrew Ortony, Diane L. Schallert, Ralph E. Reynolds, and Stephen J. Antos, “Interpreting Metaphors and Idioms: Some Effects of Context on Comprehension,” in *Center for the Study of Reading Technical Report No. 93* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, July 1978), 2-5. A much smaller article by the same title is published as Andrew Ortony, Diane L. Schallert, Ralph E. Reynolds, and Stephen J. Antos, “Interpreting Metaphors and Idioms: Some Effects of Context on Comprehension,” *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 17, (1978). As for gaining competence, one discusses the role of communicative competence above. However, metaphorical competence is critical here as well. Stern proposes that “There is an essential component of a speaker’s knowledge of metaphor that lies within his general semantic competence ...,” Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 8. Stern recognizes that this competence is not the only component and is not, by itself, “sufficient to yield knowledge of a metaphorical interpretation.” As noted above, Stern includes knowledge of context as essential as well, *ibid*.

³³⁸ Cavell quotes William Empson in Stanley Cavell, “Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy,” in *Philosophy in America*, ed. Max Black (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967). Stern’s Davidson quotes are from Davidson,

the interpretation, or content, of the metaphor is finite and fixed.”³³⁹ This must be so, Stern reasons, because to attempt to communicate an endless number of possible meanings for a single metaphor in a single context means that the one attempting to communicate this meaning would never stop, but would go “on and on, mentioning feature and feature, proposition after proposition, literally never coming to end...”³⁴⁰ His nuanced position is quite important. It is not that a metaphor cannot have an infinite number of meanings, but that in a fixed context it does not have an infinite number of meanings because the context constrains the meaning.

Stern’s further arguments regarding metaphor are reason for pause to interpreters of the Bible who are trying to recover, as much as possible, an author’s intent. Stern appears willing to admit that the content of a metaphor “in future contexts is neither determined nor constrained by the original author’s intention in choosing the metaphor with its respective character, or meaning.”³⁴¹ However, he also states that while later interpreters of the metaphor may assign new meaning to the metaphor, they are “not revealing, or recovering, content originally intended by the one who introduced the metaphor.”³⁴² Thus, for those biblical interpreters to whom author’s intent is an important aspect of theology, they must attempt to determine authorial meaning, or restricted range of meaning, as found within the author’s context and co-text.

"What Metaphors Mean." The actual quote Stern cites comes from a revised form of the article published in Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 263. Stern’s critique of endless meaning in a particular context is found in Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 270.

³³⁹ Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 269.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 270. In the same place, Stern notes that Cavell and Empson use the metaphor of pregnancy for their position of endless meaning, saying that metaphors are pregnant with meaning. He turns this metaphor against them, noting that it would be a “strange pregnancy if it had not term and if it issued forth in endless streams of progeny.”

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

1.4.3 Symbol

Many texts speak of the symbolism of the Book of Revelation, though they do not define what they mean by this or distinguish it from metaphor, imagery, and other forms of figurative language.³⁴³ Often, their descriptions use the above terms interchangeably, serving to confuse readers regarding the figurative language of Revelation. Van der Watt's dynamics of metaphor approach seeks to resolve this issue by more carefully defining symbolism to distinguish it from metaphor and the broader category of figurative language.

Van der Watt quotes Baldick in saying that symbol "may be used for anything that stands for or represents something else beyond it – usually an idea conventionally associated with it."³⁴⁴ By convention, one understands that they are using the term in the same way of Kövecses, "in the sense of well established and well entrenched."³⁴⁵ Van der Watt continues, arguing that in order for a reader to grasp the meaning for a literary symbol, they would have to connect the symbol to its referent and its referent is extra-textual.³⁴⁶

This definition generally encompasses the field of semiotics and refers to objects, such as flags or crosses. In literary terms, Baldick continues by arguing, "...a symbol is a specially evocative kind of image; that is, a word or phrase referring to a concrete object, scene, or action

³⁴³ To be fair to these commentators, the same is true for many so-called dictionaries and articles on symbolism. They seem to avoid the hard task of definitions and instead just assume prior knowledge, which they themselves may or may not possess! E.g. Michael Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Juan E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*. trans., Jack Sage, Second ed. (London: Routledge, 1971).

³⁴⁴ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 1.

³⁴⁵ Kövecses includes an important distinction regarding the definition of convention. He argues that the term conventional in linguistics, semiotics, and the philosophy of language usually means "arbitrary." When used in the context of metaphors however, he uses conventional "in the sense of well established and well entrenched," Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 34.

³⁴⁶ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 2. In the same place, he also states, "Conventions are usually not explicitly formulated in a text."

which also has some further significance associated with it: roses, mountains, birds, and voyages have all been used as common literary symbols.”³⁴⁷

To this definition, Abrams adds that symbols can be conventional, what he also calls public, or they can be private. He contends that public or conventional symbols are “symbolic objects of which the further significance is determinate within a particular culture.”³⁴⁸ Private symbols are those an author uses “...whose significance they largely generate themselves, and these pose a more difficult problem in interpretation.”³⁴⁹

Symbols, Abrams continues, are different from metaphors in that they do not serve as vehicles in a metaphor. They are concrete objects, literal objects, which clearly possess a meaning beyond themselves, like the cross for Christians.³⁵⁰ In this way, it seems that the meaning of a metaphor is in the text, whereas the meaning of a symbol is outside it, found in the socio-historical beliefs or conventions of a culture or group. Similarly, Fadaee writes that symbol differs from metaphor in that “it does not contain a comparison, but by virtue of association represents something more than itself.”³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Chris Baldick, s.v. "Symbol." Second ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 251-252. Abrams definition is quite similar, writing “...the term ‘symbol’ is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself,” Meyer Howard Abrams, s.v. "Symbol." Seventh ed., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999). Childs and Fowler are, in one’s opinion, less helpful. Quoting Kant, they record that one defines symbol “in terms of the ‘attributes’ of an object ‘which serve the rational idea as a substitute for logical presentation, but with the proper function of animating the mind by opening out for it a prospect into a field of kindred representations stretching beyond its ken’ ...,” Peter Childs and Roger Fowler, s.v. "Symbol." *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

³⁴⁸ Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* s.v. "Symbol." Seventh ed., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999).

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Fadaee, "Symbols, Metaphors and Similes in Literature: A Case Study of 'Animal Farm'," 20-21. While Fadaee may be correct, one cannot help but wonder whether his definition goes too far. For instance, in Abram’s use of the cross as a concrete object, which possesses meaning beyond itself, one could restate the symbol in terms of a comparison, understanding the word “represents” in Fadaee’s definition as a comparison. An example would be “the cross is the sacrifice of Christ” or something along these lines.

It seems plausible however that a symbol does not necessarily have to begin with a conventional idea, but perhaps after it first appears, it later becomes conventional.³⁵² For instance, in Jeremiah 1:13-15, the LORD apparently gives to the prophet Jeremiah a vision and then asks, “What do you see?” Jeremiah sees a boiling pot, tilted away from the north, to which the LORD responds, “Out of the north disaster shall break out on all the inhabitants of the land.”³⁵³ The passage goes on to describe the tribes of the north who will come, destroy the cities of Judah, and sit upon the thrones of Jerusalem.

Based on this passage and others like it, one wonders if this is a case of a novel symbol.³⁵⁴ At some point, all symbols have their genesis and in Jeremiah, he literally sees a boiling pot, but the boiling pot stands for something other than itself, apparently disaster, in this case, the tribes of the north. While one could frame Jeremiah 1 metaphorically, it is difficult to determine the nature of the metaphoric comparison. Does the boiling pot symbolize disaster, or is it the vehicle of a comparison with the tribes of the north? The answer appears to be that of symbol.

It is noteworthy that it is possible that the New Testament, when borrowing symbols from the OT, changes the conventional meaning associated with it in the OT. Revelation, when drawing on both the conventional symbols of the OT and NT, may diverge from both.

One wonders if this relates in any way to Abrams’ description of public and private symbols. If an author uses a symbol unconventionally, or to modify or alter its meaning slightly, the author could be taking a public symbol and making it private based on his context. In this

³⁵² Kövecses, although referring to metaphors, writes of the *scale of conventionality* (italics his). A metaphor that is quite familiar is highly conventional and one that is new or unfamiliar is highly unconventional or novel, Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 35.

³⁵³ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*.

³⁵⁴ The melting pot could be a private symbol that becomes public.

way, following Van der Watt's assertion regarding metaphors that the message trumps the form, an author's message may demand the reinterpretation of a symbol because his message, perceptions, or purpose(s) may differ from that of previous messages, perceptions, or purposes. It may also be that his message is a direct challenge to these previously held beliefs.

This is at least a possibility that one must be prepared for in studying Revelation. John may use a previously conventional or public symbol from the OT and NT and make it private by adjusting it to his message and purposes. It is also possible that John reverses this, taking a previously private symbol, novel symbol, or little used literary symbol, and he conventionalizes it through systematic and repeated use.³⁵⁵

McComisky, in the context of John's adaption of OT imagery for his own "Christocentric proclamation" in Revelation, observes, "We frequently find in its pages imagery hauntingly familiar to us from the OT but different in form or application from its OT setting."³⁵⁶ Although conflating imagery and symbol at times, McComisky correctly wonders whether John's practice is a matter of discontinuity for Revelation and the OT, understanding The Apocalypse as some kind of progression in the work of God requiring adaptation, or whether John is attempting some kind of continuity. It seems possible that it could be a little of both. While McComisky does not address how John deals with continuity and discontinuity from the rest of the NT, the same idea applies.

McComisky's work rightly draws upon the work of D.S. Russell. Russell, in writing about Daniel's "conscious adaptation of prophecy," believes that most of Daniel's references to other parts of the OT "hardly amounts to interpretation or reinterpretation. They are simply

³⁵⁵ The number seven could be an example of this.

³⁵⁶ Thomas Edward McComisky, "Alteration of OT Imagery in the Book of Revelation: Its Hermeneutical and Theological Significance," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36, no. 3 (September 1993): 307.

illustrations of the influence of the Old Testament writings upon his thinking and expression.”

However, Russell continues, believing that in other instances, “... a conscious attempt is made to reinterpret former prophecies and in particular to adjust and adapt words and phrases to make them fit into a new set of circumstances prevailing in the author’s own day.”³⁵⁷

Russell does not stop with Daniel. He especially identifies ways in which Ezekiel also changes and reinterprets older prophecies to fit into his circumstances as well.³⁵⁸ If older biblical authors and biblical traditions find little difficulty adjusting and adapting images, symbols, and prophecies for their own context, it is not hard to imagine how John might do this do as well.

The issue of how to understand the ways in which the NT uses the OT in various ways is not new to biblical studies.³⁵⁹ Recently, in response to a rigorous debate with Steve Moyise, Beale produced a handbook to help, from his perspective, guide students and exegetes through the pitfalls and perils that arise in such a task.³⁶⁰ It comes almost two decades after a previously edited book in which Beale had solicited essays from across the spectrum of biblical scholarship on the use of the OT in the NT.³⁶¹

For his part in the debate, Moyise has prolifically published a series of books on the subject, ranging from the entire NT use of the OT,³⁶² to specific foci, such as Jesus’ use of the

³⁵⁷ David S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200 B.C. - A.D. 100*. ed. G. Ernst Wright et al., The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 190.

³⁵⁸ Russell pays particular attention to Ezekiel 38-39 and the way in which he believes Ezekiel changes the Gog and Magog language to suit his own context, *ibid.*, 191-193.

³⁵⁹ Early and influential works, beginning mid-20th century, include Charles H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology*. (London: Nisbet, 1952); E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*. Second ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960); Richard T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*. Reprint ed. (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1971, 1998); David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: A Study of the Theological Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*. Revised ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976, 1991).

³⁶⁰ Gregory K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012).

³⁶¹ Gregory K. Beale, ed. *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994).

³⁶² Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction*. (London: T&T Clark International, 2001).

OT,³⁶³ Paul's use of the OT,³⁶⁴ the later NT use of the Old Testament,³⁶⁵ and the Book of Revelation's use of the OT.³⁶⁶

While this section does not intend to address this debate in depth or add to it in any way, one notes here that awareness of potential continuity and discontinuity between the symbols, metaphors, and other figures of speech in the OT, NT, and John's Apocalypse is a necessity and a part of studying Revelation's dynamics of metaphor. When necessary, one will note considerations as they arise and draw upon the works of those noted here, among others.

One has also attempted to distinguish carefully between symbol and metaphor. While it is possible that a metaphor could make previous use of a symbol, once that symbol becomes a part of the metaphor, it ceases to be a symbol. The nature of symbols produces less restrained meaning, and once a linguistic utterance so constrains a symbol, it takes on more of the specific comparisons of metaphor.

1.4.4 Analogy

As with metaphor, analogy can be difficult to define, although one believes that some effort to this end is appropriate for the study of metaphor. Such effort is required to distinguish, if only nominally, between metaphor and analogy, even if, as Bailer-Jones writes, the distinction is not a sharp one.³⁶⁷

³⁶³ Steve Moyise, *Jesus and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).

³⁶⁴ Steve Moyise, *Paul and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010).

³⁶⁵ Steve Moyise, *The Later New Testament Writings and Scripture: The Old Testament in Acts, Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles, and Revelation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012).

³⁶⁶ Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*. Library of New Testament Studies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

³⁶⁷ Daniela M. Bailer-Jones, "Models, Metaphors and Analogies," in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Peter Machamer and Michael Silberstein, Blackwell Philosophy Guides (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002), 108. She writes "Metaphor and analogy ... are manifestations of ways in which information can be expressed and, as some would argue, is processed in our mind."

Blevins and Blevins allege that analogy relates to the fact that “The human mind is an inveterate pattern-seeker.”³⁶⁸ The mind attempts to find and classify patterns, relate these patterns to other patterns, and attempt to calculate additional patterns.³⁶⁹ The reasoning process by which this is done “requires the discovery of structural similarities between perceptually dissimilar elements.”³⁷⁰ It also requires that “...we infer a conclusion based on similarity of two situations.”³⁷¹

Flinn defines analogy as “...proportional speech: A is to B as C is to D” and gives the example that “...God is to his creation as the potter is to her or his pot.”³⁷² He continues by stating that analogy “is based on the resemblance or similarity, but not absolute identity, between two objects of speech.”³⁷³ White, like Flinn, believes that analogy is the four-term relation of A is to B as C is to D and he attempts to restrict discussions about God to this category of analogy.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁸ James P. Blevins and Juliette Blevins, eds., *Analogy in Grammar: Form and Acquisition*, Oxford Linguistics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. Blevins and Blevins go so far as to state, “...the talent for analogical reasoning constitutes the core of human cognition.” This type of reasoning, according to Genesereth and Kao, is a part of non-deductive processes which also include induction (reasoning from the particular to the general) and abduction (from effects to possible causes), Michael Genesereth and Eric Kao, *Introduction to Logic*, (Morgan & Claypool, 2013). https://wiki.eecs.yorku.ca/course_archive/2014-15/F/4412/_media/intro_to_logic.pdf (accessed 16 November 2015), 5.

³⁷¹ Genesereth and Kao, *Introduction to Logic*, 5. So also Miller, George A. Miller, “Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors,” in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge; New York, Oakleigh, AU: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 378.

³⁷² Frank K. Flinn, *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. J. Gordon Melton (New York: Facts on File, 2007), s.v. “Analogy.” Bailer-Jones affirms the definition of analogy as proportional, giving the example of “2 is to 4 as 4 is to 8,” Bailer-Jones, “Models, Metaphors and Analogies,” 110.

³⁷³ Flinn, *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. Melton (New York: Facts on File, 2007), s.v. “Analogy.” Although referring to argumentation, Hurley observes that argument from analogy “...depends on the existence ... of ... similarity, between two things or states of affairs,” Patrick J. Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic*. Eleventh ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2012), 37.

³⁷⁴ Roger M. White, *Talking About God: The Concept of Analogy and the Problem of Religious Language*. ed. Martin Warner and Kevin Vanhoozer, *Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology* (Farnham, ENG; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 9. White also helpfully begins his work by consciously developing an understanding of analogy independent from theology.

This view concurs with Black's description of the comparison view of metaphor. He argues that in such a view, the "transforming function involved in metaphor" is analogy or similarity. He states "M [metaphorical expression] is either similar or analogous in meaning to its literal equivalent L [literal expression]."³⁷⁵

In the structure mapping theory of metaphor, according to Gibbs, analogy is "...a mapping of knowledge of one domain (the base) onto another (target) that conveys a similar system of relations among the objects in both the base and target domains."³⁷⁶ Clement, concerning this similarity, notes that the similarity must be "...deemed valid or sound," and then "...useful additional information can sometimes be inferred in the target."³⁷⁷

However, Griffiths goes further, supposing that humans have a "...tendency to interpret and label the world by analogy with what we understand most intimately, such as our own bodies."³⁷⁸ This means that in the comparison of domains that use analogy, authors, speakers, and their audiences will likely understand the target domain better than the source or base domain, thus the necessity of the analogy.

This process of correspondences, similarities, or domain mapping is more complex in sentences that do not possess the simple, surface metaphor structure of nominals and a copulative verb. Thus, the analogy is more complex. Kintsch writes using the example of the verbal metaphor "she blew up at me."³⁷⁹

³⁷⁵ Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 35.

³⁷⁶ Gibbs Jr., *The Poetics of Mind*, 243-244.

³⁷⁷ John J. Clement, "Creative Model Construction In Scientists and Students: The Role of Imagery, Analogy, and Mental Stimulation," (Springer, 2008), 22.

³⁷⁸ Patrick Griffiths, *An Introduction to English Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edinburgh Textbooks on the English Language (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 40.

³⁷⁹ Walter Kintsch, "How the Mind Computes the Meaning of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 136.

Since people often use analogy as a means of acquiring information or knowledge about something else via comparison, this use of analogy often results in the creation of neologisms.³⁸⁰ In studying John's metaphors, which work by way of analogy,³⁸¹ one concludes that identifying the cultural and linguistic associations of the comparisons in the metaphor is necessary in a search for meaning. However, one must also be aware that John may be creating new expressions, or neologisms, such as new metaphors, that are not identifiable prior to the Book of Revelation.

Analogy, like metaphor, may exist in different categories. Bailer-Jones distinguishes analogies into two classes: formal and material. A formal analogy "points to relations between certain individuals of two different domains that are identical, or at least comparable."³⁸² A material analogy exists when "...individuals of the domains are not required to share attributes."³⁸³

Ashworth describes three different types of analogies in the medieval period. The analogy of proportionality, "...a comparison of two proportions or relations,"³⁸⁴ the analogy of attribution, "...a relation between two things, of which one is primary and the other is secondary," and the analogy of imitation or participation, as used by theologians, "...appeals to a relation of likeness between God and creatures."³⁸⁵

³⁸⁰ Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*. (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Tokyo: Prentice Hall, 1988), 178.

³⁸¹ Recognizing the possibility that not all metaphors may work by analogy, so Dedre Gentner and Brian Bowdle, "Metaphor as Structure-Mapping," in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 110.

³⁸² Bailer-Jones, "Models, Metaphors and Analogies," 110.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ashworth gives the example of a point and a spring of water, writing "...a point is related to a line as a spring is related to a river," E. Jennifer Ashworth, "Medieval Theories of Analogy," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2013).

³⁸⁵ Ibid. Ashworth also writes that analogy to Aquinas was "...the method of showing that one part of scripture did not conflict with another." In relation to Ashworth's description of three types of analogies, Ross appears to agree but uses different terminology, categorizing them as "analogy of being (of reality between God and world, and among created realities, too); analogy of meaning (words and concepts); and analogical thinking (of conception by

Gibbs also summarizes how metaphor works by analogy, according to Aristotle, and much later by I.A. Richards. Quoting from Aristotle's *Poetics*, he records that "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from a genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on the ground of analogy."³⁸⁶ Richards, according to Gibbs, condenses Aristotle's definition to "...metaphor consists of two terms and the relationship between them ... the relationship between the topic and the vehicle is the ground."³⁸⁷ Thus, metaphor works by way of analogy through the ground between the topic and the vehicle. In this way, the ground is determined via a comparison or interaction between the tenor and the vehicle.³⁸⁸

In conclusion, this work will primarily understand analogy terms of proportionality; A is to B as C is to D.³⁸⁹ It understands that metaphor is a linguistic feature, identifiable based on its structure, as well as contexts, while analogy is a process by which metaphor works.³⁹⁰ Although analogies can be metaphorical, an analogy functions differently from the metaphor in that as a

proportionalities)," James F. Ross, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Donald M. Borchert, 2nd ed. (Detroit; New York; San Francisco; San Diego; New Haven, Conn; Waterville, Maine; London; Munich: Thomson Gale, 2006), s.v. "Analogy in Theology."

³⁸⁶ Gibbs Jr., *The Poetics of Mind*, 210.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Black, following I.A. Richards, agrees. In writing about the ground, he writes that the "...reader is forced to connect the two ideas," Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 39. Stern believes that analogy is just one of many potential grounds for the way metaphors work. He also includes relations of similarity, dissimilarity, connotational features, iconic features, semantic fields, and features of interaction, Stern, *Metaphor in Context*, 112.

³⁸⁹ The writer is also aware that a slavish adherence to a comparison view of analogy is unhelpful. Noting Black's objections that the poetic creation of metaphor often defies strict scientific analysis, such as definite and predetermined comparisons of A is to B in respect of P, one is also aware that without efforts to analyze ancient metaphors in this way, there is no method for understanding them, since the intricacies of language and culture are lost, Max Black, "Metaphor," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55, (1954-1955): 284. Black also writes that it would be "more illuminating in some of these cases to say that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing," *ibid.*, 285. However, even with this qualification, one would still need a way of discovering how the creator of a new metaphor via analogy intends to use his or her comparison.

³⁹⁰ Gentner and Bowdle, "Metaphor as Structure-Mapping," 109. Alcouffe summarizes well one of the positions on analogy as the process underlying metaphor, contending that metaphor is "...the syntactic realization of an underlying cognitive process: analogical reasoning," Phillipe M. Alcouffe, "Metaphorical Shift and the Induction of Similarities" (M.S. thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, July 1986), vii.

process it is not limited to metaphor, but takes various forms. Based on the above definitions, analogy is more than a metaphor. As a process of comparison or similarity, it can work using simile, metonymy, or even synecdoche.³⁹¹ One creates metaphor by the incongruity of its constituent parts at the semantic level, but this incongruity requires the use of analogy to understand its meaning. Not all forms of analogy work this way.

1.4.5 Typology

A term that one wishes to define, but will not use, is typology. From the outset, one believes that typology is a hermeneutical category, not a linguistic one.³⁹² As Gundry notes, it is an effort to preserve the unity of the OT and the NT. While this may be a desirable task among certain interpretative communities, it is a theological/apologetic task, more than a linguistic one. Since this is a study of a linguistic theory of metaphor, typology seems an inappropriate category.

One of the problems with typology as it relates to this dissertation is that at times some interpreters ignore clear metaphors in an endeavor to promote typology.³⁹³ Several interpreters use this term instead of a linguistic one in their efforts to understand the language of Revelation. Therefore, some attempt at understanding it is necessary.

³⁹¹ See Miller who expresses that simile is just one kind of analogy, Miller, "Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors," 379.

³⁹² Although Good has an interesting book studying potential similarities in templates, which may or may not one day affect biblical studies, he admits his study works backwards, in that it describes and compares, but does not explain, nor does it propose a new theory of grammar. He further stresses that typology may not even be an appropriate term as he seeks to study similarities of templates. He defines templates as "grammatical patterns where the form of some linguistic constituent appears to be well conceptualized as consisting of a fixed linear structure, whether in terms of its arrangement of its subconstituents or its overall length," Jeff Good, *The Linguistic Typology of Templates*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 1, 4.

³⁹³ Osborne's effort to understand the metaphor of the two witnesses in Rev. 11:3, for instance, is typological rather than metaphorical, although he does not label it as such, Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 418.

The definition is one that interpreters debate and about which there is little scholarly consensus.³⁹⁴ Gundry quotes Anderson, writing that typology “is a means to express the Biblical [sic] understanding of history.”³⁹⁵ Patzia and Petrotta define typology as “Biblical comparisons and links made between persons, events, things and institutions of one biblical period and those of another, particularly between those of the OT and the NT.” They further state “Typology is employed by biblical authors to show continuity in God’s plan...” and is “the attempt to detect types in the biblical text ... and suffers from the excesses of some of its practitioners.”³⁹⁶ In addition to the excesses of practitioners, Anderson notes that those who use it to demonstrate the Christocentric unity of the Bible may and often do, “impose an artificial unity upon Scripture and frequently results in an overinterpretation of the Old Testament.”³⁹⁷ While one is not inherently opposed to the use of typology in general, it is not a substitute for the linguistic basis of metaphor studies, and lacks identifiable methodology.³⁹⁸

Lastly, typology admittedly focuses upon the unity of history and scripture in a Christian interpretative process. However, typology does not account for the discontinuity that exists between the OT and the NT. Rather than slavishly seeking a radical continuity a linguistic approach to metaphor allows each context to determine the meaning of the metaphor. This is not to say that John’s metaphors do not draw upon previous contexts for their meaning. However, as

³⁹⁴ Stanley Gundry, "Typology as a Means of Interpretation: Past and Present," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 12, no. 4 (1969).

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 234; Bernard W. Anderson, "Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. Bernard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 177.

³⁹⁶ Arthur G. Patzia and Anthony J. Petrotta, s.v. "Typology." *Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 119.

³⁹⁷ Anderson, "Exodus Typology in Second Isaiah," 178.

³⁹⁸ Evans provides one of the more useful overviews of typology, but, following Chilton, admits that the differences between typology, allegory, midrash, pesher, and other forms of early interpretation are less about method and more about “what Scripture is essentially taken to be,” Craig A. Evans, "Typology," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 862. His overview includes several examples that include actual lexical connections to *typos*, but beyond this, it is difficult to demonstrate typology beyond one’s own assertion.

one will demonstrate, John's metaphors and contexts have significant discontinuity at times from the OT and simply assuming a continuity can, and often does, violate the way in which John uses his metaphors.

1.5 *Types of Linguistic/Literary Metaphors*

Building upon Miller, Van der Watt identifies several key types of metaphor.³⁹⁹ First, he describes a surface metaphor, in which both the tenor and vehicle are present in the same sentence or immediate context.⁴⁰⁰ Secondly, a submerged metaphor occurs when the tenor and vehicle are not both present in the immediate context, but one can discover them in the extended context.⁴⁰¹ Generally, the vehicle appears first with the tenor appearing later.⁴⁰² Finally, Van der

³⁹⁹ David M. Miller, *The Net of Hephaestus: A Study of Modern Criticism and Metaphysical Metaphor*. (The Hague; Paris: Mouton Publishers, 1971). One also notes here that the types of metaphors and process for identification described herein are a simple, yet better method than the proposed MIP: Metaphor Identification Procedure of the Pragglejaz group, Group, "MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse," 3. The four-step process they propose, which includes reading the entire work for its general meaning, establishing lexical units or pericopes, performing synchronic and diachronic word studies, and making a judgment regarding metaphor or something else, is nothing more than the simplest forms of exegesis done by seminary Bible students. Its scope is not wrong, but it is not as revolutionary as the opening paragraphs seem to indicate. One of the individual members of the group, Gerard Steen, has written a much better summary of the MIP, but one could find the same basic procedures for biblical exegesis in Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*. Third ed. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

⁴⁰⁰ An example appears in Revelation 1:8, I am the alpha and the omega.

⁴⁰¹ Although Cameron uses the term "topic" instead of tenor, she notes that topics are frequently absent in metaphors requiring one to infer meaning from the context. She also notes this absence rarely causes problems in shared understanding and that the absence of a topic may be because of the author or speaker wishing to shift the meaning of a vehicle term. When misinterpretation does occur, it is likely the result of an interpreters ignorance of the topic, Cameron, "Metaphor and Talk," 201.

⁴⁰² Van der Watt writes that "both tenor and vehicle are present, but not in the same microscopic context, but in the macroscopic context. The tenor is mentioned later in the context," Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 20-21. An easier example is Revelation 1:12 where John sees someone like a son of man walking among the seven golden lampstands. It is not until 1:20 that John reveals, "...the seven lampstands are the seven churches." Van der Watt mentions that Miller describes both a suspended metaphor and a submerged metaphor. Miller argues a suspended metaphor reveals the tenor later, whereas in a submerged metaphor the tenor is completely absent from the context. Van der Watt chooses to combine the two and uses only submerged metaphor. One may argue here, depending on the depth and breadth of context, that one only needs one term, submerged, since in both the tenor is absent. The difference is that one may find the tenor in the near context or will have to look farther at other, related, or influential texts, *ibid*. What Van der Watt calls a submerged metaphor is essentially the definition that Mary Coloe uses for symbol as she states, "A symbol, as distinct from metaphor, only presents the vehicle and the reader is required to supply the tenor," Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 6. Coloe's view is similar to that of Jones, whom Van der Watt notes in

Watt describes a composite metaphor as, “several metaphors in a larger context are linked or function together.”⁴⁰³

Regardless of the type, metaphoric sentences generally contain incongruity at the semantic and syntactic level.⁴⁰⁴ This occurs when a literal understanding of the sentence is inappropriate to the co-text and context, or is absurd.⁴⁰⁵ Communicators often express this incongruity using copulative sentences, discussed in more detail below.⁴⁰⁶ In the case of John’s

disagreement, see Larry Paul Jones, *The Symbol of Water in the Gospel of John*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement, vol. 145 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 14.

⁴⁰³ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 21.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 7. So also Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, 24. Aaron goes so far as to write, “Virtually all theorists accept that metaphor, by its nature, involves a kind of logical incongruity or nonequivalence,” Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery*, 28. In the same place, Aaron notes that Ricoeur calls this “semantic impertinence.” Ricoeur writes that the semantic impertinence at the predicative level, which indicates the presence of metaphor, creates a “new semantic pertinence,” at the very same predicative level, Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*, 154. The concept of incongruence is in direct opposition to Green, who although not writing an academic treatise on metaphor, nonetheless argues, “A metaphor consists in the juxtaposing of two elements that share some basic congruence...” Barbara Green, *Like A Tree Planted: An Exploration of Psalms and Parables Through Metaphor*. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 11.

⁴⁰⁵ For example, in the ubiquitous illustration, “The man is a wolf,” it is ontologically impossible that a man can be a wolf. This is not to say, however, that incongruity is the only measure of a metaphor. Glucksberg argues persuasively that metaphor does not just work when the literal interpretation fails, but that understanding metaphorical meaning is just as natural and immediate as understanding literal meaning. Thus, he rejects that “literal meanings have unconditional processing priority,” Glucksberg, “How Metaphors Create Categories -- Quickly,” 68. This means the hearer or reader does not first reject the literal in order to move to the figurative, but rather naturally and immediately understands the metaphorical. In fact, drawing upon Miller and Johnson-Laird, Glucksberg argues that people automatically understand metaphor and cannot consciously reject its meaning any more than they can consciously reject literal meaning, *ibid.*, 69. While persuasive for modern speakers and hearers, it is not necessarily so for modern audiences interpreting ancient metaphors. Devitt and Hanley are correct that metaphors do not represent an improper or deviant use of the literal, but their reason for this is faulty. They argue that metaphors are equally true in some contexts whether literal or metaphorical, Michael Devitt and Richard Hanley, “Introduction,” in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Michael Devitt and Richard Hanley (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), 7. They are likely considering de-contextualized metaphors, as many theorists use these as examples in their work. A metaphor cannot exist in a literal or metaphorical context as they describe, as this is a self-defeating argument. A literal statement cannot be a metaphor. Context must make a metaphor clear.

⁴⁰⁶ One of the areas of figurative language which is beyond the scope of this work, is the difference between metaphor and simile and the way in which people cognitively process them, e.g. Zazie Todd and David D. Clarke, “When is A Dead Rainbow Not Like a Dead Rainbow? A Context-Sensitive Method For Investigating Differences Between Metaphor and Simile,” in *Researching and Applying Metaphor*, ed. Lynne Cameron and Graham Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). At a linguistic or semantic level, the difference between the two in the Greek of the Book of Revelation is relatively simple. One notes metaphors above, but in a simile, John utilizes two primary words, one an adjective, the other a conjunction, for comparison. The most common is ὡς, used 71 times in Revelation, with nearly all of them arguably similes. It is a conjunction translated into English with like or as. Its presence in chapter one is ubiquitous, second only to chapter nine in density, e.g. 1:10, “a loud voice like a trumpet,” and 1:14, “his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of

Apocalypse, two nominatives, one a subject, the other a complement or predicate, compare by way of equative verbs.⁴⁰⁷ For instance, Revelation 1:8 records of the, “I am the Alpha and the Omega.”⁴⁰⁸ It is ontologically impossible for “I”, referring to the Lord, to be the actual Greek letter alpha, not to mention both the alpha and omega simultaneously.⁴⁰⁹

While this incongruence is a primary way in which to interpret metaphor, specifically for ancient, dead languages where the immediacy of metaphorical meaning is not available due to the lack of primary speakers, semantic or syntactical incongruence is not the only way in which

fire,” *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. It is thought provoking that seven of eight uses in chapter one are John’s descriptions of Jesus. The same construction appears in 5:6. When God or Jesus self-disclose in the text, only once does Jesus use ὥς, in 2:18. In examining John’s use of ὥς, it is ostensibly a narrative characterization strategy as most references are character descriptions. Why this is remains for another study. The second most common word appearing in similes in Revelation is ὅμοιος, an adjective meaning “like”, which appears 21 times, as in 1:15, “... his feet were like burnished bronze.” One additionally notes that καθὼς, translated as or just as, and which may have some overlapping uses with ὥς, does not appear in Revelation. Other words of comparison, which are most likely to appear in NT similes, and as found in Louw-Nida, are as scarce, Louw and Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 1:616-618.. Leaving out those comparison words that are most likely not similes, one begins with ὡσπερ, as or like, which is only in 10:3, “... he gave a great shout, like a roaring lion.” ὥσει, as or like, does not appear, nor do ὁμοιότης, the noun form of the adjective ὅμοιος mentioned immediately above, nor is the verbal form, ὁμοιόω, found in Revelation. This last absence is interesting as 14 of the 15 uses in the NT are arguably similes, with most appearing in narrative contexts surrounding Jesus, and which emerges in Matthew, Mark, and Luke as marking a parable. Παρομοιάζετε is a NT *hapax legomenon* in the clear simile of Matthew 23:27.

⁴⁰⁷ Although some grammarians use the term “equative” as a synonym for copulative, one follows Winner, Engel, Gardner, who write concerning the indirection of metaphor, “The indirection of ... metaphor involves an assertion of equivalence that is not to be taken literally, but is to be transformed into an assertion of similarity,” Winner, Engel, and Gardner, “Misunderstanding Metaphor: What’s the Problem?,” 23. Beale calls this type of metaphor a formal metaphor, but this title does not distinguish it from other types of metaphor, merely from other types of comparisons, Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 57.

⁴⁰⁸ It is curious that the Greek of Rev. 1:8 writes out Ἀλφά, but only uses the letter for the omega, Ω. Thomas, citing Nestle, Metzger, and Aune, argues that the name “omega,” in place of or used for the symbol, did not originate until the 7th century CE, Rodney Lawrence Thomas, *Magical Motifs in the Book of Revelation*. (London, New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 145.

⁴⁰⁹ Aaron rejects the binary approach to metaphor that words are either literal or metaphorical. He prefers to speak of “gradience,” seeing meaning as a continuum and asking instead if “one comment ... is more metaphorical than another comment,” and to what degree, Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery*, 29. Aaron calls his non-binary form of gradience, “conceptual ascription,” which has two subdivisions, functional ascription and structural ascription, *ibid.*, 59-83, 111-124. Howell offers a concise critique of Aaron, but oddly calls Aaron’s approach “functional ascription.” While mentioning Aaron by name, he does not cite Aaron’s text or pages for his critique, making it difficult to determine how he arrived at the governing term of “functional ascription,” rather than “conceptual ascription,” Howell, *In the Eyes of God: A Contextual Approach to Biblical Anthropomorphic Metaphors*, 13.

metaphors may appear. This incongruence must take place in a context or co-text that indicates it as such.

For instance, to borrow a metaphor from Steen, one can say, “Sam is a gorilla.” Steen uses this metaphor in the context of comparing a man named Sam to a gorilla. According to Steen, this is a metaphor because it “involves a contrast between ... gorillas and humans which may be bridged by constructing the similarity between the two.”⁴¹⁰ However, imagine the context is that of a nature hike where a group of young students is learning about a primate named Sam, and one of the students asks the instructor, “What kind of primate is Sam?” The instructor answers, “Sam is a gorilla.” In this context, the utterance is not a metaphor. Therefore, one can conclude that the overall context and co-text contribute to incongruence in metaphor along with sentences and words.

Interestingly, even when decontextualized sentences like “Sam is a gorilla,” appear, modern people may be more likely to choose this as a metaphor than not. Glucksberg, in addressing ambiguous sentences like the one given here, demonstrates this.

Although using modern, living languages, he has produced studies on sentences, and more particularly on noun-noun combinations, which are ambiguous with respect to literal or metaphorical meaning.⁴¹¹ In the tests, one can understand each sentence either as literal or metaphorical as there is no context, and Glucksberg argues that respondents overwhelmingly choose metaphorical meaning in such ambiguous situations. Because of this, even when a sentence is not immediately identifiable as a metaphor, but may be taken as either literal or metaphorical, he writes that “neither literal nor metaphorical can be ignored,” but that “when

⁴¹⁰ Gerard Steen, "Finding Metaphor in Discourse: Pragglejaz and Beyond," *Culture, Language, and Representation* V, (2007): 10.

⁴¹¹ Glucksberg's examples are exactly the kinds of situations Van der Watt addresses as one notes above with respect to his example of the John 15 metaphor, “My father is the gardener.”

either is available, then they are processed.”⁴¹² He goes so far as to say that in these situations, metaphorical meaning is often preferred.

Regardless of syntactically, grammatically, or contextually dependent metaphors, authors of any language tend to have surprisingly few options available to them in communicating metaphor and its incongruity. Sullivan demonstrates that while one may understand some metaphors independent of context by these language restrictions, even context and co-text dependent metaphors are restricted in their grammatical and syntactical constructions.⁴¹³ Although Sullivan captures the few constructions available to communicators of metaphor, Van der Watt’s categories are philosophically similar and easier to process.

1.5.1 Verbs/Non-Copulative Sentences/Substantives

Van der Watt notes an author or speaker does not limit metaphors to sentences where he or she expresses metaphor primarily by means of comparing substantives, as described below in copulative constructions. There are occasions where a communicator may express metaphor by means of other verbs or verbal constructions.⁴¹⁴ Here Van der Watt uses the example of “Jesus shepherds his disciples,” where the verb “shepherds,” conveys the metaphors of Jesus as shepherd and the disciples as sheep.⁴¹⁵ A good example is Revelation 14:16, the earth was harvested “or reaped.”⁴¹⁶ In the immediate co-text of 14:18, John repeats the idea of reaping,

⁴¹² Glucksberg, "How Metaphors Create Categories -- Quickly," 70.

⁴¹³ Karen Sorenson Sullivan, “Grammar in Metaphor: A Construction Grammar Account of Metaphoric Language” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkley, 2007), 67ff.

⁴¹⁴ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 21-22.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴¹⁶ ἐθελίσθη, was harvested, draws its meaning from the noun form of harvest, θερισμός, used in the co-text.

where the earth is a vine, the angel is the harvester, the grapes or clusters, which the angel harvests, are the wicked, whom the angel throws into the winepress of God's wrath.⁴¹⁷

At this point, it is necessary to note that as with all languages the Greek text of Revelation makes use of transitive, intransitive, and ditransitive sentences. Here one understands that transitive sentences are those that involve a transfer of action between subject and object, intransitive sentences are those constructions that have no transfer of action, possessing only a subject and a verb,⁴¹⁸ and ditransitive sentences involve a volitional subject transferring to an indirect object.⁴¹⁹

While communicators often express the metaphoric elements in a sentence through the subject, object, and indirect object, as is similar to the copulative subject and predicate, in many cases, as stated above, the metaphor is contained in the verb.⁴²⁰ Any effort to analyze deductively the metaphors in John's apocalypse must consider what type of sentence contains the metaphor

⁴¹⁷ It is significant however, that John uses two different words for reaping in this section. In 14:14, as immediately above, John uses the verb ἐθερίσθη, "was harvested or reaped." It is arguably always in the context of grain in the NT, e.g. Jas. 5:4. However, in Rev. 14:18, John uses a form of τρυγᾶω, gathering or reaping, which the NT uses only here (twice) and in Luke 6:44, and is always in the context of grapes. The harvest of grain and of grapes are both images of judgment in the gospels. Questions as to what the sickle and winepress refer are left unanswered in Revelation 14. Van der Watt discusses the metaphor of the harvest in the gospel of John at length. In John 4:35, for instance, where Jesus is preaching to the Samaritan woman of Sychar at Jacob's well, Van der Watt sees the Samaritans as representing the fields and the fruit (grain) and the disciples are the harvesters. He goes on to write that, "being harvested means that they [Samaritans] will be taken up into the life and family of God," Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 95-96. This imagery is in stark contrast with the harvest metaphor of Revelation 14. Here one should clearly view the clusters of grapes as wicked and their harvesting is not becoming a part of the life and family of God, but rather as punishment. The angels throw the wicked into the winepress of God's wrath and, presumably, Christ tramples them there "outside the city." See Rev. 19:15 for the identity of the one trampling the wicked. In John 4, the harvesters seem to experience joy and no such emotion is present in Revelation 14. Given the overall imagery of harvest in the New Testament, the two passages are related. The difference seems to be, as put in Luke 6:43-45, whether the fruit is good or bad.

⁴¹⁸ Although a classic, biblical example is "Jesus wept" in John 11:35, the example of Revelation 14:16, "the earth was harvested," also applies. The Greek clause contains only a subject and verb.

⁴¹⁹ The definition of ditransitive is from Sullivan, "Grammar in Metaphor: A Construction Grammar Account of Metaphoric Language", 113.

⁴²⁰ Cameron records that "63% of the linguistic metaphors" in her research of English speakers were "verbs or verb phrases," Cameron, "Metaphor and Talk," 200. Another lacuna in apocalyptic studies is a computational analysis of the density of different types of metaphors in the Apocalypse.

and whether the metaphoric elements appear primarily in the substantives, such as subject, object, and indirect object, or whether the verbs demonstrate this function.

In non-copulative verbal constructs, Max Black's terminology of focus and frame are quite helpful. Using the example, "the chairman plowed through the discussion," Black identifies the word plowed as a metaphor and labels it the *focus* of the metaphor in the sentence, since it is the primary metaphorical word in question.⁴²¹ The remaining parts of the sentence Black calls the *frame* of the metaphor.⁴²²

Black is clear in stating that a *focus* word, like plowed, is only a metaphor when used within the proper *frame*, or in other words, a *frame* that makes it evident one intends to use a metaphor, as in the above construction.⁴²³ However, if one said, "The farmer plowed the field," the frame is substantially different and one may understand the word plowed quite literally. The interplay between the *focus* and the *frame* in each of the examples using plowed is what determines it as a metaphor.⁴²⁴

In the Revelation 14:16 example, the NRSV writes of the one who sat on the cloud (who was like the Son of Man), and records that he, "swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped." The word "reaped" is the *focus* of the sentence and the surrounding discussion of the angel and sickle are the *frame*. It is difficult to imagine that one could take the metaphor of an angel reaping the entire earth in a literal fashion, as though he was gathering all the earth's real grain. This is especially true as 14:18-19 continue the reaping focus, albeit with respect to grapes and not grain, and record a genitive metaphor, "the winepress of the wrath of God."

⁴²¹ Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 28.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

1.5.2 Copulative Sentences

The use of copulative sentences is an aspect of metaphors in general and this is true of John's Apocalypse.⁴²⁵ Greek grammar expresses these in terms of two nominatives, a subject and a predicate, compared by means of a copulative verb. As stated above, the tenor is generally that noun or substantive which refers to an object in a literal sense, while the vehicle is the noun or substantive which, given its incongruity to the first substantive, transcends the literal and becomes metaphorical.⁴²⁶ Using the example, the girl is a flower, girl is the tenor and flower is the vehicle.⁴²⁷

However, to say that the tenor is equal to the subject and the vehicle is equal to the complement or predicate is inaccurate.⁴²⁸ It is possible that an author will reverse the example above and write, "The flower is a girl." Grammatically, flower is the subject, but unlike above, where the subject and tenor are the same, here the flower is the vehicle and girl is the tenor. This is also typical for the Apocalypse, as in 1:20 when John writes, "The seven stars are the angels

⁴²⁵ Sullivan argues that copulative sentences are among the top five constructions in which languages communicate metaphors. However, compared to other categories, she writes that such constructions are rare, Sullivan, "Grammar in Metaphor: A Construction Grammar Account of Metaphoric Language", 67. One questions this conclusion as it relates to biblical Greek.

⁴²⁶ Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, 25-29.

⁴²⁷ In a purely propositional scenario, one can write that a copulative sentence is an example where S is a P, that is, the subject is a predicate. In general, S is then a subset of P. For instance, using an example from Rips, Shoben, and Smith, A robin is a bird, where robin is a subset of bird. This could continue as they demonstrate where bird is a subset of animals, where animals is a superset. They argue that the greater the semantic distance between words in the proposition, the longer it takes a person to process the relationship. Therefore, a robin is a bird is easier to process than a robin is an animal. This was, however, not true when one used a single word infrequently or when the word is a more difficult word. E.g., a bear is a mammal was slower in processing than a bear is an animal because mammal is infrequently used and is more difficult. Processing speed was quicker when the two words came from opposite categories, such as a robin is a car. So Lance J. Rips, Edward J. Shoben, and Edward E. Smith, "Semantic Distance and the Verification of Semantic Relations," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 12, (1973). In terms of metaphor, which often uses incongruence of categories, it seems that processing would be faster the farther the categories are from each other. More on this below. For more on the definition of sets and subsets, see Irene Heim and Angelika Kratzer, *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 4-12.

⁴²⁸ In writing of the predicate nominative in biblical Greek, Wallace states, "The predicate nominative (PN) is approximately the same as the subject (S)," and "The equation of S and PN does not necessarily or even normally imply complete correspondence," Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 40.

...” and “the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” Moreover, as below, one may communicate tenor and vehicle in other constructions beyond the copulative sentence.

This reversal in the surface structure is limited, however, as Glucksberg and Keysar point out. Using the examples of “A mighty fortress is our God,” and “Our God is a mighty fortress,” they state, “The surface reversal, then, can be acceptable only when the relative roles of topic and vehicle are unaffected by that reversal.”⁴²⁹ However, in many instances, to reverse a metaphoric statement is to change its fundamental meaning and what the author or speaker asserts.⁴³⁰

For instance, Kövecses writes that a linguistic metaphor can be reversed, such as “This surgeon is a butcher,” can be rewritten to read, “This butcher is a surgeon.”⁴³¹ However, while one can reverse a metaphor at a syntactical level, the meaning is changed. Kittay adopts the same posture arguing that, “Metaphorical analogies are asymmetrical for just this reason – that one side of the analogy has a privileged status in regard to the other.”⁴³²

Campbell and Katz similarly articulate this notion in stating, “Metaphor is perceived as being characteristically directional or asymmetrical ... reversing the topic and vehicle terms ... will produce items that are either meaningless or produce a metaphor in which quite a different set of meaningful characteristics have been made salient.”⁴³³

⁴²⁹ Glucksberg and Keysar, “Understanding Metaphorical Comparisons: Beyond Similarity,” 12.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 28. Avis believes one can reverse the terms, “for image is often the tenor or substance of the thought and the original occasion for the metaphor simple the vehicle for delivering the insight.” He goes on to write that distinguishing tenor and vehicle is “unhelpful,” and that it “may suffice to speak of the ‘event’ of metaphor in which two aspects are fused together instantaneously,” Paul Avis, *God and the Creative Imagination: Metaphor, Symbol and Myth in Religion and Theology*. (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 94.

⁴³² Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, 152. However, Kittay additionally notes that asymmetry is not limited to metaphor. She gives the example of the simile, “The son is like the father,” noting it is asymmetrical, but not metaphorical, *ibid.*, 153.

⁴³³ John D. Campbell and Albert N. Katz, “On Reversing the Topics and Vehicles of Metaphor,” *Metaphor and Symbol* 21, no. 1 (2006): 2. Their statements above are particularly apt as they characterize the structure of metaphor as “canonical” writing, “there is a canonical order or preference for one concept to play the role of metaphoric topic and the other the role of metaphoric vehicle,” *ibid.*

Kövecses undergirds Campbell and Katz's line of reasoning, calling the irreversibly of metaphor the principle of *unidirectionality*.⁴³⁴ The foundation for this principle according to Kövecses is that metaphor typically moves "...from the more concrete to the more abstract," resulting from people's experiences in the world and their attempts at comprehension of abstract concepts.⁴³⁵

However, at the linguistic level, the issue of reversibility may be more a problem of basing theories on either the English language or more analytical languages, rather than on biblical Greek. For instance, if one were to rearrange words from an English sentence like "The girl is a flower" and ask a proficient reader to put them in proper order, it is likely that at least some respondents would write, "The flower is a girl." This is less likely in biblical Greek due to its inflected nature and word structures.⁴³⁶

Within biblical Greek, copulative sentences follow defined grammatical and syntactical patterns. As an inflected rather than analytical language, it is possible a Greek sentence does not rigidly use the order of subject, copulative verb, and predicate, as in an English sentence. One can find words in nearly any position within a sentence.

This means that one may find two nominative substances, as in a copulative metaphor, within a biblical Greek sentence and one may question what grammatical role each substantive may play. It is possible the author interchanges the subject and predicate. This interchangeability of two nominative substantives may lead to confusion as to which substantive is acting as subject and which is predicate.

⁴³⁴ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 7.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Decker summarizes it well, writing, "...what we assume to be 'normal' word order in an English sentence can be very different in Greek, since the inflectional endings of the words tell us which words is the subject and which is the object ...," Rodney J. Decker, *Reading Koine Greek: An Introduction and Integrated Workbook*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 24. The Greek author makes it very clear which structure he intends.

Wallace demonstrates that despite the grammatical similarities of the two substantives, there are distinguishable arrangements of copulative sentences that make identification of subject and predicate and thus metaphorical identification, easier.⁴³⁷ Theoretically, one could reverse the topic and vehicle, but Greek provides more clarity as to subjects and predicates at the linguistic level than does English. One should consider such arrangements when seeking to determine whether John follows tendencies in introducing his metaphors via copulative sentences.⁴³⁸

By way of example, Wallace notes that when the Greek copulative sentence makes use of a pronoun, the pronoun is universally the subject of the sentence.⁴³⁹ In such cases, the subject pronoun is likely the tenor.⁴⁴⁰ Additionally, in attempting to distinguish subject and predicate, Wallace records that the subject of the copulative verb is articular and that if one of the substantives is a proper name, it is the subject.⁴⁴¹

Wallace also qualifies his discussion of subject and predicate in copulative sentences writing that it is possible that both substantives in the sentence possess the article.⁴⁴² In such cases, the first substantive to appear is likely the subject, with the second acting as predicate. The same is true if both substantives are anarthrous.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁷ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 42ff.

⁴³⁸ While determining subject and predicate does not by extension, equate to tenor and vehicle, this does not negate this identification as a starting point in a deductive analysis.

⁴³⁹ Except in the case of the interrogative pronoun, which is the predicate, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 43-44.

⁴⁴⁰ See Jesus' many "I am" statements in John's Gospel, as well as Rev. 1:8.

⁴⁴¹ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 43.

⁴⁴² Although addressing English sentences, Abbott discusses the typical understanding of definiteness as "uniqueness," demonstrating the error that while it is possible that some definite nouns or noun phrases are definite, they are not unique. She gives, for example, "the bank of a river." As rivers have two banks, it is unclear which bank is in question but it is certain that the bank is not unique. Rather than uniqueness, she outlines an argument for familiarity, that the speaker and hearer both understand which definite is in mind. In the bank of a river example, both participants in the communication understand which bank, and perhaps even which river, is in question. She also writes of the attributive and referential functions of definiteness, but does not address metaphor, Barbara Abbott, "Definiteness and Indefiniteness," in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 131-132.

⁴⁴³ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 44-45.

In the case of the third category, proper names do appear in conjunction with articular nouns in which the noun is the subject and the proper name is the predicate. Wallace argues that word order often plays a key role in these sentences, though some of his examples, especially John 1:1, do not fit this proposition.⁴⁴⁴ One must exercise caution and use other grammatical and syntactical clues in such cases.

While the above scenarios involve the copulative sentence as constructed with two nominative substantives acting as subject and predicate, Wallace notes that while an author may use a nominative substantive as the subject, he may substitute the nominative predicate with the preposition εἰς combined with an accusative substantive.⁴⁴⁵ Examples of this in Revelation are 8:11, καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ τρίτον τῶν ὑδάτων εἰς ἄψινθον, a third of the waters became bitter or wormwood, and 16:19, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη εἰς τρία μέρη, and the great city became [split into] three parts.⁴⁴⁶ In both cases, the role of the sentence as metaphor is debatable.

Moving beyond the substantives in copulative constructions, one must also consider patterns involving the verb in such constructions. While verbs of existence or “to be” verbs are standard, one should also consider what form these verbs take. Since Koine Greek has a more involved verbal system, which possess person, number, tense, voice, and mood, one must note patterns if they arise.

In the case of Revelation 1, all three of the surface metaphors discussed below are Present, Active, and Indicative. The person and number obviously change with the nature of the substantives in the comparison, but the fact that they are present tense warrants discussion.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 47-48. Here Wallace identifies three verbs that commonly use this substitution, γίνομαι, εἰμί, and λογίζομαι.

⁴⁴⁶ It is imperative to note again that these sentences do not themselves identify metaphors. This is a way that authors construct copulative sentences in which metaphors appear.

In the copulative metaphors here, one gives examples in English, and in the biblical Greek, which all include the present tense. The reality of this is that the tense, voice, and mood of a Greek verb have the potential to alter substantially one's perception of a sentence, including whether it remains metaphorical. To change a present tense to a past tense, risks the interpreter asking different questions.

For instance, in the "the man is a wolf," if one changes it to, "the man was a wolf," hearers or readers may be less inclined to view it as a metaphor. They may instead focus upon some literal, albeit miraculous, past transformation a wolf into a man, perhaps along the lines of the children's stories *Beauty and the Beast*, or the *Princess and the Frog*. They may ask when it happened and so on.⁴⁴⁷

If one changes the voice, from active to passive, e.g. "the man was made to be a wolf," the emphasis on the sentence could be upon a similar transformation as in the past tense, but now includes questions about agency, such as who made the man a wolf, and why. So too, in the middle reflexive voice, "the man made himself a wolf," emphasis could shift to questions of how and why these things happened, perhaps in some literal way, rather than upon any metaphorical possibilities.⁴⁴⁸

Lastly, the mood of a verb is critical. Since the mood of Greek verbs indicates a relationship of the verb to reality,⁴⁴⁹ a change in mood could change the reality in which one

⁴⁴⁷ Although Reimer and Camp do use the past tense in one of their examples of metaphor, i.e. "Christ was a chronometer," Reimer and Camp, "Metaphor," 848.

⁴⁴⁸ These are very broad categorical descriptions of the voice. There are, to be sure, more nuanced uses, driven by the co-text and salience, Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert Walter Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 161ff.

⁴⁴⁹ DeMoss defines mood as, "The feature of the Greek verbal system that denotes the nature of the verbal idea with regard to its actuality or potentiality," Matthew S. DeMoss, s.v. "Mood." *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001). Young's definition is more propositional, "Mood is a morphological feature that indicates how the speaker regards what he or she is saying with respect to its factuality," Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 136.

perceives the verb, or metaphor. In Greek, there are four moods: indicative, subjunctive, imperative, and optative. All but the first ordinarily designate potential reality, not necessarily actual reality. If one were to use the subjunctive, and say, “the man might be a wolf,” or the optative, “the man may (wish) be a wolf,” or an imperative, “You are wolf!” it can fundamentally change the perspective.

Although discussing English verbs, Allerton gives examples of verbs where changing from the past tense to the present tense causes the reader, speaker, hearer, or author, to alter the way one analyzes a verb. For instance, if one changes to the simple present from the past, emphasis could be upon a repeated eventuality, rather than past event or state.⁴⁵⁰

While noting Allerton’s use of English verbs not ancient Greek verbs, one still believes Allerton’s discussion of the differences in emphasizing events or states with respect to tense, is significant.⁴⁵¹ In the case of present, active, indicative Greek verbs, the emphasis of the metaphor is on a state, which is the point of metaphor in the first place. It describes or defines the state or existence of one thing in terms of another.

1.5.3 Genitive Case Metaphors

Van der Watt notes that beyond copulative sentences, one should take note of genitive metaphors. He uses the example, I am the bread of life, where I is the tenor, bread is the vehicle, and “of life” is a genitive descriptor of bread.⁴⁵² Although not in the form of a copulative, as in

⁴⁵⁰ David J. Allerton, “Verbs and Their Satellites,” in *The Handbook of English Linguistics*, ed. Bas Aarts and April McMahon (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), 147.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Van der Watt cites Brooke-Rose’s argument that this construction is a double metaphor where bread “is linked to both I and life”, Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 21. From the standpoint of Greek grammar, one is uncertain about Brooke-Rose’s argument, given that Greek genitives, as an almost unfailing rule, immediately follow the substantive they describe. In this case, “of life” is a further descriptive of bread and grammatically bears no relation to “I”. One argues here that the “I” equates with the bread of life, as opposed to some other kind of bread.

Van der Watt's example, one may find that Revelation 1:18, I have the keys of death and of Hades, where John specifically identifies the type of keys, is a potential instance of this.

1.5.4 Attributive Construction Metaphors

Another example of how metaphors may appear using substantives is in the instance of attributive constructions. Although Van der Watt does not use the term attributive, we find it important to add this distinction as a means of clarification. Using the example of John 4:10, where Jesus promises to give the Samaritan woman living water, Van der Watt places the example of "living water" in a category he terms as adjectives.⁴⁵³ However, from the standpoint of Greek, rather than English, the word "living" in John 4:10, is a participle functioning attributively, not an adjective.⁴⁵⁴ As Greek adjectives and participles share similar functions and appear in predicative, attributive, or adverbial constructions, this specificity aids in distinction. In predicative or adverbial constructions, adjectives and participles often fall into the standard copulative sentence category as described above. However, in attributive constructions, a metaphor may occur outside the boundaries of a copulative sentence, such as in Van der Watt's example of John 4:10, whereby the substantive and its attributive modifier, whether an adjective or a participle, are metaphors.

In the context of Revelation, attributive metaphors may be simple or complex. A complex example of attributive construction using a participle, while also an example of a submerged metaphor and a composite metaphor, is in 11:4. Here John describes the two witnesses from 11:3

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁵⁴ Moran offers an English example of an attributive adjective functioning metaphorically when he writes of a "rosy-fingered dawn," Moran, "Metaphor," 249.

as the two olives (or trees) and the two lampstands. He further adds the attributive participial clause, the ones standing before the Lord of the earth.

1.5.5 Prepositions

Finally, communicators may express metaphors using prepositions.⁴⁵⁵ Sullivan argues that prepositions present the most flexible syntactic method for communicating metaphors due to the inherent breadth of relationships that prepositions can express.⁴⁵⁶ However, the difficulty of Sullivan's examples at this point is they are mostly based on English constructions and she includes sentences using the word "of" in her category of prepositions. The word "of" is often problematic for biblical studies because of the nature of English Bible translations. In many instances, English Bibles insert the word "of" in a sentence simply because of the presence of an underlying Greek substantive in the Genitive case. The "of" is assumed in English, but not expressed in the Greek.

The problem lies in that Koine Greek uses metaphors based on substantives appearing in the Genitive case, but that are not prepositional constructions. It would be inappropriate to include such metaphors here since English assumes the presence of a preposition that is not present in the Greek. A metaphor theory of biblical Greek that introduces preposition as a separate category must only include those sentences where an actual preposition exists. Thus, in this work, one will consider only those sentences that make use of a Greek preposition in expressing metaphor, such as Revelation 17:2 where John writes, "καὶ ἐμεθύσθησαν οἱ

⁴⁵⁵ Lakoff discusses the difficulty of literally interpreting a sentence like, "I got my job through my uncle," since the preposition through generally requires the concept of a spatial path; uncle cannot represent a spatial path. George Lakoff, "The Syntax of Metaphorical Semantic Roles," in *Studies in Linguistics and Philosophy*, ed. James Pustejovsky (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 1.

⁴⁵⁶ Sullivan, "Grammar in Metaphor: A Construction Grammar Account of Metaphoric Language", 118.

κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς,” the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.”⁴⁵⁷ The presence of ἐκ indicates this metaphor fits into the prepositional category.

1.5.6 Associated Common Places

One of the most important aspects of this dissertation is its effort to determine what Max Black calls a *system of associated commonplaces*.⁴⁵⁸ In the metaphor, “the man is a wolf,” Black suggests that a person understands the metaphor by way of those things, i.e. characteristics, he or she held to be true of wolves. Black then says, “... the set of statements resulting would approximate to what I am here calling the system of commonplaces associated with the word.”⁴⁵⁹

Black further asserts that within a given culture, the responses of people regarding these characteristics of wolf “... would agree rather closely.”⁴⁶⁰ This set of statements regarding the wolf are so ingrained into a culture, that even an expert, with “unusual knowledge of the subject” would still know what the common person thinks and means concerning the subject.⁴⁶¹

The expert may even find that the things a common person believes about the wolf may be untrue, but the point is not whether something is true, but rather that people perceive certain characteristics about the wolf to be true and articulate them as such.⁴⁶² These characteristics fall into a category of otherwise literal beliefs about wolves and “... are the common possession of the members of some speech community.”⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁷ English translation from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*.

⁴⁵⁸ Emphasis are his, Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 40.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid. He says these commonplaces should be “readily and freely evoked.”

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

Denying these commonly held beliefs, such as saying "... wolves are vegetarians," creates cognitive dissonance and would require "justification."⁴⁶⁴ To say that a man is a wolf is "... to evoke the wolf-system of related commonplaces," and thus requires the hearer "... to construct a corresponding systems of implications about the principal subject."⁴⁶⁵ The reader then filters these characteristics of the wolf through a system of characteristics regarding the man. Any characteristics that one cannot render "prominent ... will be pushed into the background."⁴⁶⁶

Black believes that this process of filtering the characteristics, emphasizing some, suppressing others, helps to organize one's view of the man.⁴⁶⁷ Black recognizes that this selection process on the part of the metaphorical user consciously excludes those aspects of the system that one does not wish to highlight, thus, there is selection on the part of the speaker or author. Once the selection takes place, since the man is the principal subject, one then thinks of the man through the new meaning created by the metaphor.

Black also accounts for novel metaphors in this process. Since an author has a process of selection available to him, he may, by choice, construct a series of implications that intend to suppress certain commonly held ideas to highlight "... specially constructed systems of implications."⁴⁶⁸

While also using analogy as a means of comparison in metaphor, one expends substantial energy in discovering potential systems of associated commonplaces regarding John's metaphors in this dissertation. Since there are no native speakers of Koine Greek available to probe for

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. Black also surmises that one will begin to see the wolf in more human-like terms than he would have previously, *ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 41.

commonly held beliefs regarding the constituent parts of Revelation's metaphors, one must turn to the literature upon which John and his culture may draw. By searching the OT and other literature of the ANE, including, but not limited to, extra-biblical literature, with an emphasis on Greek literature and the LXX, one seeks to determine, within reason, the contexts in which the parts appear to determine if any overlap exists that may explain John's choice.

In the case of novel metaphors, which John is prone to construct, one examines which associated commonplaces John may suppress to construct the special circumstances required to understand his new meaning.

This system of associated commonplaces has another effect that Black does not mention, and that is to restrain meaning. One cannot make a metaphor mean anything one wants apart from constructing the circumstances that would allow a hearer or reader to understand the metaphor. Associated commonplaces within a language and culture constrain the meaning to a limited number of possibilities.

That said, there are some who might wonder why the author chooses to follow Black, and not, say, the conceptual theory of metaphor posited by Lakoff and Johnson, since this theory of metaphor is newer.⁴⁶⁹ To those who believe that Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual theory of metaphor represents the newest and most interesting ideas regarding metaphor, one disagrees.⁴⁷⁰ Their methods and ideas are more closely associated with Black than perhaps most current metaphor research realizes.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁹ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

⁴⁷⁰ One believes that Lakoff's assertion of his theory as, "The contemporary theory of metaphor," is somewhat misleading, George Lakoff, "Conceptual Metaphor: The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*, ed. Dirk Geeraerts, Cognitive Linguistics Research (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), 185.

⁴⁷¹ While there may be some authors that carefully articulate the similarities between Lakoff and Johnson and Black, one has been unable to discover them.

One must also make clear here that while there are points where the author is critical of Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual theory of metaphor, this does not mean one rejects their theory outright.⁴⁷² Quite the contrary. One agrees with them that metaphor is more than a "characteristic of language alone," and that the human conceptual system is "fundamentally metaphorical in nature."⁴⁷³

However, as one shows, it is impossible to determine the nature of that metaphorical conceptual system apart from instantiated linguistic data.⁴⁷⁴ This instantiated data of actual examples of metaphorical use within a context, is the evidence which allows one to search for potential connections between tenor and vehicle within a metaphor. This instantiated evidence is also what allows one to make assertions regarding the potential metaphorical thought processes that exist within an individual as well as a culture.

One is also critical of Lakoff and Johnson's theory because they fundamentally reject the idea of objective truth.⁴⁷⁵ Instead of objective truth, they posit a relativistic approach rooted in human experience. While one is not here to argue for objective truth, one does believe that the very foundations of relativism are cyclical and thus self-defeating when it comes to positing shared meaning in words and within cultures, as one shows elsewhere.

More to the point, however, as one already notes, their theory is not really new. For instance, in their example of the metaphor, "Time is money," Lakoff and Johnson begin

⁴⁷² See, primarily, Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁷⁴ Lakoff and Johnson do recognize the relationship between linguistic data and conceptual thinking, but this is not a priority, in one's opinion, in their literature, *ibid.*, 7. In fact, in one place Lakoff argues, "... the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another," Lakoff, "Conceptual Metaphor: The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," 185. The problem is, as one has already shown, that one cannot understand this conceptualization of mental domains apart from language, and thus to reduce language in the equation is engage in an impossibly cyclical argument of which comes first, the chicken or the egg, or the conceptual domain or the linguistic expression.

⁴⁷⁵ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, IX.

discussing what their western culture believes about time and money and the possible associations said culture makes between them. They also recognize that some cultures do not think of time and money the same way.

This construct is nearly identical to what Black notes when he explores the given characteristics between a tenor and vehicle within a culture. Perhaps the only difference is that Black is less explicit about the nature of conceptual thinking as it relates to linguistic data. Lakoff and Johnson articulate a series of associations between time and money within their culture, and conclude that the metaphor exists within a category where “time is a resource,” or “time is a valuable commodity.”⁴⁷⁶

Since “time is money,” is the more popular concept, they use this concept as the title for a category of metaphorical associations such as “spend, invest, budget, profitably, cost.” They argue that by using the more popular term and placing other associations under it, they are creating a “coherent system of metaphorical concepts and a corresponding coherent system of metaphorical expressions for those concepts.”⁴⁷⁷

Furthemore, they argue that this system “allows us to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another will necessarily hide other aspects of the concept.”⁴⁷⁸ The system they posit is a retread of Black’s assertion of a system of implications, or associated common places, whereby people filter the associations between the tenor and vehicle, emphasizing some, and suppressing others.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁷⁹ Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 40-41.

Thus, those arguing that Black's theory is older and, thus, irrelevant, should consider more closely the idea that Lakoff and Johnson have borrowed more from Black than their literature attests.

1.6 *Review of Literature*

When it comes to the interpretation of John's use of temple language in Revelation, which specifically includes the lampstands that one studies, several works help sharpen and narrow the research of the topic and this section intends to review certain of the more significant works.

One begins with a caveat. The nature of reviewing literature is to analyze for sharpening one's work. There are critical comments, which by nature help to focus one's own study, but this writer does not intend to disparage the authors here, cognizant that others will find shortfalls in this work as well, but more importantly because the author gained extraordinary insight from each work, for which he is grateful.

Listed by publication, one can see the development of thought regarding the temple in the New Testament and the Book of Revelation, as well as the ongoing efforts to explore different methodologies and ideas. These methodologies and ideas reveal many different approaches to studying temple in general and, in some cases the temple language and temple furniture in the New Testament and the Book of Revelation. One chose the books and monographs on temple because one found no extended works on lampstands alone as they relate to Revelation and the NT. Hoping perhaps to move from the greater to the lesser, from temple to lampstands, one choose the works below.

The overview reveals that a theory of linguistic metaphor as a means of explaining temple language, imagery, metaphor, and other ideas, specifically temple furniture such as the lampstands, is lacking.

Bertil Garnter's, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament*, is a seminal introduction for any comparative study regarding temple imagery, temple cultus, and

priesthood within Qumran and the New Testament.⁴⁸⁰ Gartner argues that the community at Qumran transfers the concept of the Jerusalem temple and its priests as the locus of worship in Judaism to that of its own community. The members of Qumran, believing the temple defiled and its priesthood is illegitimate, unify and spiritualize notions of the temple and its priesthood. The inhabitants of Qumran, therefore, function as both a living temple and its constituent priests. Gartner understands the references in Qumran literature to the community's initiation rites, membership, clothing, daily practices,⁴⁸¹ ritual purifications, and sacral meals, as a form of spiritualized temple cult.⁴⁸²

Furthermore, Gartner asserts the members of Qumran believed they were the true Israel, a remnant preserving righteousness until the eschaton. At the eschaton, God will build a new, eternal temple eliminating the need for the faithful at Qumran to function symbolically as the temple. Gartner concludes that one cannot find "direct parallels" of a spiritualized temple and priesthood in Judaism, thereby establishing Qumran as unique within Judaic tradition.⁴⁸³

Transitioning to the New Testament, Dr. Gartner sees the temple ideas therein as the only parallel to Qumran in its use and understanding of a spiritualized temple and priesthood,⁴⁸⁴ although admitted differences do exist.⁴⁸⁵ Gartner begins his survey of limited New Testament passages with Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. He believes this section offers the clearest congruence of temple imagery between Qumran and the New Testament. Here, Paul indicates

⁴⁸⁰ Bertil Gartner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

⁴⁸¹ Gartner reasons that individual obedience and faithfulness to the law, that which must consist of one's daily life, is a spiritual sacrifice, *ibid.*, 44-46.

⁴⁸² Gartner assumes, as do many later commentators, a single community with relatively static beliefs, *ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ Just as he supposes relatively static views of the temple at Qumran, Gartner presumes the same invariable views in the New Testament.

⁴⁸⁵ For instance, Gartner points out the historical-contextual thought world of the New Testament is dramatically different as it identifies Jesus as Messiah, Gartner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament*, 101.

that Christians, rather than the Jerusalem temple, are the true temple of God. As the temple, Christians must remain pure and holy, set apart from uncleanness. Gartner briefly touches on other Pauline segments including 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:18-22, and 1 Timothy 3:15, offering little beyond his assessment of 2 Corinthians.

Allocating the largest portion of his chapter on the New Testament to 1 Peter 2 and Hebrews 12, Gartner posits that the same Pauline perspective on the temple exists in these texts. He believes that 1 Peter 2 is the "most explicit" passage regarding temple symbolism, leaving the reader to suppose that 2 Corinthians 6, dealt with previously, contains mostly implicit similarities.⁴⁸⁶ The basis for such explication appears lexical in nature, for Gartner seeks to demonstrate verbal parallels between 1 Peter 2 and 4QFlor. 1:6, 4QpPs 37, 2:16.⁴⁸⁷ He further reasons that Peter's understanding of Christians as a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices mirrors the language of CD 4:2, 1QS 5:6, and 1QS 9:3.⁴⁸⁸ While combining his subsection on 1 Peter 2 and Hebrews 12, the author barely addresses Hebrews 12 and his examination and explanation are erratic and truncated.

Oddly, Gartner concludes his chapter on the New Testament and temple imagery with an extremely abridged appraisal of excerpts from the gospels as they relate to Jesus. Why Gartner does not begin with these selections, he does not disclose. He further complicates his study by following his subsection on the gospels with a final chapter on temple imagery and Christology. He does not adequately, if at all, address the gospel tradition of Jesus' body as a replacement

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁸⁷ Some identify 4QpPs37 as 4Q171, see Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period*. vol. 285 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 232.

⁴⁸⁸ Unfortunately, in many instances, Gartner sees connections based on a single word commonly found in comparative texts.

temple and offers little in the way of real analysis in either section, making broad and merely referential statements by way of Qumran.

In summary, Gartner's work is most helpful as an introduction to the topic of temple imagery at Qumran and the New Testament, though his definition of imagery is not clear. His greatest contribution is his section on 2 Corinthians 6 and 1 Peter 2. With respect to John's Apocalypse, Gartner says nothing, and offers little rationale as to why he examines some New Testament excerpts and not others. His analysis of a very few Qumran manuscripts, particularly at the grammatical and syntactical level, is superficial. Finally, his assumption that temple imagery is static in both the literature of Qumran and the New Testament, as well as the ethos of their respective communities, is unconstructive.

One's own method attempts to define imagery, as opposed to metaphor and symbol, to help focus any study of temple language in Revelation, but more specifically, one's understanding of the lampstands' metaphor. One also believes that figurative language in general, and metaphorical language particularly, is not static, and changes according to an author's purpose.

In a published dissertation, Andrea Spatafora offers a monograph length contribution to exploring the subject of temple in John's Apocalypse.⁴⁸⁹ Spatafora identifies the need to address traditions related to temple in the Hebrew Bible, early Judaism and the New Testament as potential precursors to the temple images of Revelation.

While the work reviews a wide array of literature, it is cursory in nature and often descriptive. It lacks organization and linear argumentation, often leaving the reader disoriented. For instance, Spatafora proposes a biblical theological study of the temple in Revelation, but

⁴⁸⁹ Andrea Spatafora, *From the Temple of God to God as Temple*. (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1997).

does not define issues or methodologies that constitute this study. Without introducing the necessity and process of his study, the author commences a lexical analysis of related Hebrew and Greek words for temple and tabernacle mostly divorced from their historical and literary contexts, and he does not focus on related terms, which contribute to an overarching temple image, such as the lampstands, Ark of the Covenant, or altar.

However, even this analysis is not exhaustive. Spatafora examines selected passages in the Hebrew Bible, early Jewish literature, and New Testament, providing no rationale as to why he chooses these passages and overlooks other, potentially equal pericopes. Since he rarely addresses possible dates for the documents he surveys, it is impossible for the reader to obtain any sense of the diachronic development of the words for temple rooted in a social, religious, or historical tradition which may serve as the foundation for John's use of temple imagery in Revelation. This is important since his work appears focused on semantics.

The strength of the work lies in its assumption that the use of the word temple in the Apocalypse is metaphoric and rooted in Old Testament tradition.⁴⁹⁰ One agrees entirely that temple is metaphoric and rooted in OT tradition and Spatafora's work helped one to understand the need to define metaphor, the types of metaphor, and show how the linguistic milieu of the OT shapes Revelation's metaphors.

Robert Briggs', *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation*, is a background investigation of temple motifs in John's apocalypse.⁴⁹¹ Briggs' implicitly defines "backgrounds" in terms of literature that precedes the text in question and that derives from specific religious

⁴⁹⁰ In chapter one, entitled "The Temple in the Old Testament," the author briefly surveys and condenses pertinent passages stating, "They are the source for any metaphoric or symbolic use of the temple in the NT," *ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁹¹ Briggs, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation*.

traditions. Issues of archaeology, as well as social, religious, and political concerns do not appear to be a part of Briggs' definition of backgrounds.⁴⁹²

A clearly identifiable thesis for Briggs' work is absent. It appears he intends to show that the temple images in Revelation derive from the Old Testament but does not indicate why this is necessary or fully explore what these images may mean. The book, as summarized in the opening paragraphs, begins with an outline and apology of methods.

In keeping with a literary backgrounds investigation, Briggs' introductory chapter argues that since the OT scriptures are integral to John's religious tradition,⁴⁹³ they should be the focal point of the study. Additionally, while admitting that Greco-Roman literature and non-Jewish works of the ANE are tangentially relevant to the study, the work restricts itself to the OT and non-scriptural Jewish literature.⁴⁹⁴

Furthermore, as Briggs' definition of backgrounds requires that the literature predate the text in question, he excludes rabbinical literature, as well as NT Apocrypha, NT Pseudepigrapha, the Targummim, and Nag Hammadi writings and the NT, because their late composition prohibits them from being influential.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Similarly, Briggs avoids any discussion of genre. He quotes Vorster, arguing that, "Texts do not have meaning because they are structured, but because they are related to other texts and their meanings...", Willem S. Vorster, "'Genre' and the Revelation of John: A study in text, context, and intertext," *Neotestamentica* 22, no. 1 (1988). Vorster's argument fails under the scrutiny of linguistics, particularly socio-linguistics. Texts, in fact, must have structure to have meaning. Texts, also, have meaning apart from other texts, especially original texts, or first texts within a language group. In the case of first texts, there are no other texts to relate. Texts can also relate to non-textual entities for meaning, such as people, animals, ideas, or objects.

⁴⁹³ Briggs, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation*, 6.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7-9. Briggs dates Revelation to the late 60's CE, indicating tacit support for late dating the remainder of the NT. The issue of Revelation's date is so significant to Briggs that he dedicates the largest portion of his introduction to this topic, *ibid.*, 23-39. One disagrees with Briggs' belief that only literature predating Revelation bears influence. The reality is that only pre-existing or co-existing literature may be an intertextual influence. Similarly, while not discounting the importance of dating Revelation, one also disagrees with Briggs that the date of Revelation plays such a significant role.

Briggs' chapters proceed based on the priorities noted above. His second chapter examines various Old Testament themes,⁴⁹⁶ such as the lampstand,⁴⁹⁷ the pillar,⁴⁹⁸ the altar and incense,⁴⁹⁹ the Ark of the Covenant,⁵⁰⁰ a heavenly temple, and an eschatological temple, although it does not appear to consider the word "temple" itself.⁵⁰¹ The third chapter explores the OT Pseudepigrapha, the fourth chapter briefly examines Qumran literature, and the fifth chapter quickly investigates OT Apocrypha, Philo, and Josephus. His sixth and final chapter presents his conclusions.

While Briggs' work presents several interesting ideas and traces certain temple motifs throughout the Old Testament, he does not define what he means by imagery, which he uses in

⁴⁹⁶ The author calls these themes peripheral temple themes, but offers no real rationale for distinguishing them from his more central tenets.

⁴⁹⁷ Contrary to many significant commentators, Briggs notes that the term for lamp or lampstand in Revelation is not uniform and that this may be of significance. For instance, in 1:12, the term is *λυχνία* and in 4:5, it is *λαμπάς*. He also notes that the lampstand last appears in 11:3ff, though the reasoning for this appears beyond the scope of his work. He is part of a consensus believing that the lampstand is a clear association with Zechariah 4, though the precise nature of this association is uncertain, Briggs, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation*, 64-66.

⁴⁹⁸ Briggs' notes that Christ's promise to make the overcomer "a pillar in the temple of my God," in Rev 3:12, derives not from allusions to actual pillars in the tabernacle or temple, but rather from Isaiah 22:23. Here, God states, with respect to Eliakim, that he "will drive him like a peg in a firm place..." Thus, the peg is a symbol of permanence, *ibid.*, 67-74.

⁴⁹⁹ Here Briggs rightly notes the debate as to whether the Apocalypse references two altars. Rev 8:3 mentions an incense offering and 9:13 indicates a golden altar in heaven. Debate exists as to whether these altars are identical or whether both an incense altar and a holocaust altar appear. However, as Briggs' notes, there is little evidence that the OT imagines anything like a holocaust altar in heaven. It also seems out of place with early Christian doctrine regarding the sufficiency of Christ's death as a holocaust sacrifice. The author concludes that the altar is the altar of incense, whose imagery stems from Ps. 141:2, where incense equates to prayer. Therefore, Revelation's altar images, including those in 9:13-15, 14:18-20, and in 16:7, represent both the prayers the saints offer to God and God's response to these prayers, *ibid.*, 74-85.

⁵⁰⁰ Noting that the Ark of the Covenant has no real comparison in the ANE, Briggs outlines the description and role of the Ark as found in Exodus. He begins with Exod. 25:10-22 and sketches the Ark's multiple or changing functions: transporting the tablets of the testimony; God's *kavod* appearing on the mercy seat to instruct Moses; the cultic function focused on the Day of Atonement rituals, where the high priest atoned for his own sin as well as that of Israel. Ultimately, Briggs concludes that Ark, due to its carrying of the testimony, is the "appurtenance par excellence of the *covenant* between God and His people *Israel*," and that all other allusions to it as a throne, chariot, footstool, etc. are peripheral. As he moves to the Ark's final reference in the biblical corpus in Rev. 11:19, Briggs argues that John and his readers would have been surprised by the appearance of the Ark centuries after its disappearance and that they would have fondly recalled all the functions of the Ark. This seems a strange idea given that he relegates many functions as peripheral. In conclusion, Briggs assumes that the Ark in Rev. 11:19 is the literal box of the OT and that its presence reaffirms that the covenant between God and Israel is still intact. Given his academic background, one wonders if this reflects a dispensationalist influence, *ibid.*, 85-96.

⁵⁰¹ This may be in response to Andrea Spatafora. Oddly, as noted above, Briggs entitles these as "peripheral" themes, though he does not state which temple themes are more germane or why.

his title, nor does he define metaphor, symbol, or other figurative terms. This may be because when he does offer a brief interpretation of the images, symbols, and metaphors surround the temple language, many of them are not figurative in nature.

Briggs reinforced for this writer the need to consider the OT literature, but to articulate why this is necessary in a linguistic metaphor approach. It also demonstrated the need to show, in certain circumstances, a broader view of the ANE literary, social, and historical perspectives when examining metaphor.

A comprehensive and methodical examination of Revelation's temple imagery is Gregory Stevenson's, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation*.⁵⁰² His expansive chapters and categories merit scrutiny.

From the outset, Stevenson recognizes the multicultural environment of the New Testament and thus John's need for multivalent images. He argues that such images must not only transcend Jewish traditions of temple and encapsulate Greco-Roman ideas, but they must synthesize in the book of Revelation.⁵⁰³

His assessment of the temple in John's apocalypse focuses on the social and religious background of Greek, Roman, and Jewish temples. He primarily limits attention to the literary tradition of Judaism and then only includes those texts he identifies as Jewish Apocalyptic. He appears to make minimal effort to examine primary Greek or Roman literary sources for temple imagery within the body of his work and thus does not delineate whether these sources are apocalyptic.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰² Gregory Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation*. (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001).

⁵⁰³ Stevenson's introduction includes a well-conceived discussion of the philosophical differences between symbols and images, but he fails to clarify any definition or paradigm that he will apply in his study, *ibid.*, 6-9.

⁵⁰⁴ The author devotes the entirety of chapter four scrutinizing Jewish apocalyptic texts. It seems unbalanced not to comment on why he does not employ a similar method for Greco-Roman sources. Stevenson does relegate many

Stevenson commences his analysis by addressing Greek and Roman temples without demonstrating their priority over the Jewish temple. He states that for the Greek and Roman worshippers, the temple embodied divine presence. Because of this, Stevenson writes, "It was a place of access ... the temple was where one encountered the deity."⁵⁰⁵ If someone or something destroyed a temple, it was because the divine presence of a deity was, for some reason, absent.⁵⁰⁶

The Greeks and Romans connected this divine immanence with statues and thrones. Thus, access to these icons was limited based on various criteria and depending on location.⁵⁰⁷ The temple unified communities and regions around the worship of their deity. Thus, Stevenson concludes that Greek and Roman temples were places of social, political, and economic stability, as well as sources of identity and pride.

It seems that Stephenson does not articulate that New Testament literature prior to Revelation plays a critical role in the cultural context of Revelation.⁵⁰⁸ Although Christianity encompasses both Jewish and non-Jewish peoples, the assimilation of these groups into Christianity is decades old. It is likely they had some exposure to gospel teachings on temple, as well as those of Paul and Peter. While this was likely outside the scope of his study, a note to this effect would have enhanced his introduction.

Unfortunately, Stevenson's identifying multicultural and religious backgrounds to Revelation's temple imagery ignores key considerations. He opens with relevant questions to his

primary sources to footnotes, but undertakes no systematic study of specific sources, thus leading to generalized assertions about what Greeks and Romans believed.

⁵⁰⁵ Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation*, 42.

⁵⁰⁶ Stevenson here cites Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 2.27.69, as well as Plutarch, *Alexander*, 3.5-7, when they write that Artemis was absent from the temple at Ephesus when it burned in the 4th century B.C.E. because she attended the birth of Alexander the Great, *ibid.*, 43. The resemblance to Ezekiel 10:18-22, where Yahweh vacates the temple, is obvious.

⁵⁰⁷ Purity, gender, and virginity, among others.

⁵⁰⁸ This is an ironic omission given that Stephenson argues for the principle of circularity and accumulation regarding temple references in Revelation. That is, earlier references inform later references and later references build upon the foundation of previous ideas. It seems only natural that John would use other New Testament traditions in this principle as well.

study, but does not explicitly consider concepts of temple that transcend buildings. For instance, he overlooks the role of a physical or spiritual Jerusalem or New Jerusalem, as the home of the temple, or a type of temple itself. Neither does he address the role of the human body as a temple of God. The gospels indicate that Jesus claims his body is a temple and Paul instructs his readers that their bodies, as well as their congregations, are temples. Peter uses similar language while speaking of Christians as a living house. One wonders whether this concept is not only present in Jewish religiosity, but in Greco-Roman cultic thought.

Similarly, Stevenson begins his analysis of Jewish temple traditions in Exodus, stating, "Within Israelite tradition, Mt. Sinai functions as the initial meeting place between God and Moses."⁵⁰⁹ He correctly understands that God's instructions to Moses for an earthly tabernacle mirror those of the heavenly temple, but he neglects the fact that Israelite tradition also includes the account of Genesis. The pattern of the heavenly temple that Moses is to model is also the pattern of Eden. As he omits Genesis, he disregards the Abraham narratives, such as Genesis 22, as well.

Finally, Stevenson's emphasis concentrates more on the social and cultural influence of temples as understood in biblical literature, as opposed to noting how biblical literature might influence society and culture. The two exist in a symbiotic relationship and though assertions of social and cultural influence are correct, his efforts to combine social/cultural influences and literary influences in a single volume emerge ambiguous.

Stevenson especially helped shape the need to examine aspects of Greco-Roman culture in one's own study, but that these aspects need to remain focused on a specific idea, such as their role in determining associated common places. Finally, he helped to formulate the necessity of

⁵⁰⁹ Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation*, 116.

articulating a theory for understanding the figurative use of temple, or its furniture, such as lampstands.

The last work one considers here is Mary Coloe's *God Dwells With Us*.⁵¹⁰ Coloe's work is a highly organized, to the point, and instructive look at Temple symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, or the Gospel of John. She carefully and simply writes her purpose, which is to "... show that the Temple is not one symbol among many, used by the community to express who Jesus is for them; for the Johannine community the Temple is the *major* symbol ..."⁵¹¹ She believes this symbol functions in two ways, first, to show that the temple, "... as the dwelling place of God, points to the identity and role of Jesus," and secondly, that "The imagery of the Temple is transferred from Jesus to the Christian community, indicating its identity and role."⁵¹²

Coloe uses the word symbol repeatedly, and unlike many other authors addressing the symbolic value of the temple, she precisely defines it. She posits that a symbol is "... the joining together of two otherwise dissimilar realities."⁵¹³ She understands these realities to be "incongruous and mutually exclusive," and this incongruity forces the listener or reader, "... to transcend the literal meaning of words and glimpse a further level of possible meanings."⁵¹⁴

For Coloe, the difference between symbol and metaphor is one of structure. Whereas a metaphor has a tenor and a vehicle, complete with the comparison of two realities in one place, a symbol represents a statement containing only the vehicle of the metaphor, requiring the reader "... to supply the tenor."⁵¹⁵ Failure on the part of the reader to do so results in literalism and lost meaning.

⁵¹⁰ Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 3.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid., 4.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

After the Romans destroyed the temple, she sees a two-fold transfer of meaning taking place, one within Judaism and the other within Christianity. She believes Judaism transferred the meaning of temple and its sacrifices “into daily living,” and a Torah-centered community, while the Johannine community “... transferred the meaning of Temple to the person of Jesus.”⁵¹⁶ In this way, the temple is not literal, but rather symbolic.

She proceeds to examine specific texts within the Gospel of John that portray the symbolic meaning of Jesus as the temple, John 1:1-18, 2:13-25, 4:1-45, 7:1-8:59, 10:22-42, 14:1-31, and 18:1-19:42. In the opening pericope, she draws upon the verb *σκηνώω*, I dwell, in John 1:14, and its use for God dwelling with us. The text reads, “The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth (NRSV).”

Since this verb derives from the tabernacle imagery of the OT, and the noun form refers to the tent of testimony, the divine logos intends to present Jesus as the tabernacle/temple.⁵¹⁷ She believes that John 1:14 is “... the basic creedal statement of the Johannine community.”⁵¹⁸

Coloe then traces the emphasis of God’s dwelling among us as it relates to God’s presence in the OT tabernacle/temple. She includes in a brief examination of the Canaanite influence on the Israelite traditions of the Ark and the Tent, and, in looking at the Ark and Tent in Israel, concludes that one important difference between them is that Ark was not a place where God presence dwelt, but rather a “rallying point ... for military and cultic purposes.”⁵¹⁹

The book includes a chapter on the body of Jesus as temple in the synoptic tradition. It is a helpful overview of each evangelists’ unique perspective on Jesus’ relationship to the temple.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 35.

Coloe believes that it is noteworthy that John's explicit temple imagery begins with Jesus cleansing the temple in John 2. This narrative follows the wedding at Cana narrative and Coloe connects them, writing, "Just as Israel's water rituals have been perfected in the good wine provided by Jesus, the next scene shows the overturning of Israel's sacrificial cult and the passing of the Jerusalem Temple."⁵²⁰ This narrative is symbolic of Jesus as the true house of God.

Coloe's chapter on Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman is a convincing argument, logically and structurally, that Jesus not only intends to supplant the Jerusalem temple, but the Samaritan sacred place on Mount Gerizim. She concludes that the person of Jesus "... creates a new sacred place that does away with regional sanctuaries..."⁵²¹ In the Samaritan context of Jacob's well (viewed as a gift in the narrative), Jesus has supplanted Jacob "in the gift he offers – the living waters of eschatological salvation ..." and, as the true object of worship, he unifies the Jews and Samaritans rather than divides them over sacred places.⁵²²

Skipping to her penultimate chapter, Coloe shows that John brackets his gospel with portrayals of God's presence among us in John 1:1-19 and John 18:1-19:42. The first presents Christ as the logos and flesh dwelling among us and the last portrait emphasizes the destruction and raising of a new temple, that is, the body of Jesus.⁵²³

In discussing the death of Jesus, she outlines the imagery underlying the killing of king. She notes that in the narrative of Jesus' trial with Pilate, Pilate calls Jesus "King of the Jews," and the Jews proclaim Caesar as their ruler. She sees this an idolatrous claim by Israel,

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 69.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 86.

⁵²² Ibid., 112-113.

⁵²³ Ibid., 179.

renouncing God's sovereignty and "abdicating its own unique position" under God.⁵²⁴ In killing the king and destroying the temple of his body, Jesus' is in the process of raising up a new temple, fulfilling his promise in 2:19, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."⁵²⁵

In the end, one finds Coloe's work and conclusion quite compelling and informative, although one's approach is significantly different. One area of difficulty is in terms. The definition Coloe uses for symbol, one calls a submerged metaphor. If one were to supplant submerged metaphor for symbol, there would be little disagreement in terms.

However, the difference in terms is important. For in understanding something as a metaphor, it changes the way one must go about searching for and comparing associated common places and understanding how the metaphor works, for instance by way of analogy. By this author's definition of symbol, that is, something that stands for something else beyond itself or something that a culture conventionally associates with another thing, Jesus' body is not a symbol for temple in Jewish culture, nor is any other human body, which is part of why the Jews accuse him of blasphemy in the first place. The culture would not conventionally associate Jesus' body with the temple, or if it did associate people, kings, etc. with a temple, Coloe does not demonstrate how the culture conventionally associates the idea of God's dwelling place with a person. The issue then is not just one of terms, but one of methodology. The definition of the term affects the approach.

One advantage of her definition over others is that many writers consciously or subconsciously attempt to turn the tenor of a metaphor into symbol, which results in unrestrained meaning and the potential for an impossibly large number of meanings.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 185.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 190.

Coloe's work highlighted the need in one's work to be cognizant of definitions, since, as one shows, a symbol and a metaphor, particularly a submerged metaphor, are not the same in this dissertation. Furthermore, how one goes about determining the meaning of each is not the same process as well.

In summary, the above works helped to sharpen the approach one takes in the research of a linguistic theory of lampstands in Rev. 11:3-4. Although the above material demonstrates some degree of research on the historicity of the temple and its furniture, and even a small amount of discussion on the figurative nature of the temple and its furniture in certain contexts, there is no extended discussion of these realities as they appear in linguistic metaphors. Thus, one believes there is a need for definitions and categories of metaphors and other figurative language relating to the temple, specifically the lampstands in Rev. 11:3-4, as well as sharpened methodologies for identifying and interpreting metaphors in Revelation, specifically the metaphor of lampstands.⁵²⁶

1.7 Conclusion to Methodology and Literature Review

One began this chapter noting the tendency of many interpreters regarding Revelation to focus upon theological systems of interpretations rather than allowing the language of John's text, that is, his linguistic dynamics, to guide them in interpreting temple language. These theological commitments, while helpful in some cases, are also a hinderance, when the system imposes a standard that is unnatural to communication, such as demanding strict literalism.

One proposes that linguistic dynamics, specifically those regarding how authors structure linguistic metaphors and employ them contextually, is another, perhaps even more natural approach, to interpreting Revelation.

⁵²⁶ One believes that while the method and approach taken here focus on lampstands, they can extend to other metaphors in Revelation as well.

Having laid out one's metaphorical approach in this chapter, a somewhat eclectic approach which relies upon, yet deviates from, and advances the dynamics approach of van der Watt, and the interaction of associated common places of Black, one proceeded with a survey of literature.

As shown, there were no extant approaches to metaphors in Revelation, and more specifically, no metaphorical studies regarding John's temple language, particularly the study of the metaphor of lampstands. Thus, one will proceed with a proposal of metaphor theory in Revelation regarding the lampstands metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4, to recommend a new avenue for exploring John's temple language.

2 CHAPTER TWO: A THEORY OF LINGUISTIC METAPHOR IN JOHN'S APOCALYPSE AS DEVELOPED FROM REVELATION 1

As stated above, Revelation's introductory verses invite the reader into a symbolic or figurative communication. In a way, these verses prime, or tune, the reader to expect figurative language, metaphor, and more.¹ The reader, given this prime, is more likely to process potentially metaphorical statements faster.

However, it is not just Revelation 1:1-3 that give rise to this assertion. The opening chapter includes numerous metaphors, not to mention similes, which further serve as a contextual prime for readers and hearers regarding what is to come. Therefore, one proposes here to examine certain metaphors in Rev. 1 as test cases prior to focusing upon the lampstands metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4. These metaphors serve as primes as well, guiding the reader early on that Revelation uses figurative language, specifically metaphors, and the reader should expect more to come.

Three of chapter one's metaphors are explicit surface metaphors; Revelation 1:8, "I am the Alpha and the Omega,"² and Revelation 1:20 records both, "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches," and "the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

In these three examples, common sense rules out understanding these lines as anything but metaphors.³ According to Glucksberg's descriptions, all three of these metaphors are nominal

¹ Recall Cameron argues that author's often "tune" the reader, or prepare the reader to expect metaphors, Cameron, "Metaphor and Talk," 202-203. One here prefers the term "prime."

² Similar surface metaphors using first person comparisons regarding God or Jesus are in 1:17-18, 21:6, and in 22:16. A potential, multilayered metaphor of similar construction, though referencing Babylon, is in 18:7.

³ That these are metaphors is consistent with what Aune calls the "reveal/conceal dialectic" in ancient Mediterranean literature. He defines this dialectic as a paradox where the hidden, now revealed, still remains concealed, as only the wise would know the information divinely or angelically revealed, David E. Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and the

and are literally false. Nominal metaphors, or surface metaphors, taken literally, "...are defective ... because they do not make sense in the context of the utterance."⁴ Thus, in Revelation 1, one cannot assert that God or Jesus are the two Greek letters Alpha and Omega, or that the seven stars and seven lampstands are ontologically angels or churches, respectively.

Thus, an examination of the grammar, syntax, and cultural context of these exemplary metaphors establishes an umbrella under which one may study temple metaphors, as well as providing insight into John's general strategy of metaphors.

Additionally, as Van der Watt argues, "...the understanding of a metaphor is dependent on sufficient knowledge about the objects referred to in the metaphor."⁵ Therefore, one must also attempt to examine extant primary source literature to determine potential cultural meaning associated with any metaphor.

2.1 Revelation 1:8 – I am the Alpha and the Omega

One begins the test cases on metaphors in the Apocalypse with Rev. 1:8, believing that the method and conclusions of such text cases serve to guide the method and conclusions of the lampstands metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4.

In Rev. 1:8, John records the first of what is a relatively rare occurrence in the Apocalypse, divine discourse.⁶ Whereas the author identifies the speaker as κύριος ὁ θεός, the

Problem of Genre," in *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins, Semeia (Decatur, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1986), 84. In this category of reveal/conceal, Aune believes the Apocalypse contains only three such examples of dialectic, the two here in 1:20 and the Rev. 7:13-17 where the "great host in white are those who have come out of the great tribulation, *ibid.*, 85. One would not necessarily limit it to only three, as for instance, Rev. 5:8 and 8:3 reveal that the incense in the golden bowls are the prayers of the saints.

⁴ Glucksberg, "How Metaphors Create Categories -- Quickly," 67.

⁵ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 26.

⁶ Although, as Roloff notes, God, as distinct from Jesus, only speaks here and in 21:5-8, Roloff, *The Revelation of John*, 28.

Lord God, the speaker uses the self-designation, Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ Ἀλφά καὶ τὸ Ὠ, I am the Alpha and the Omega.

As a surface metaphor, I is the tenor in both comparisons here, and Alpha and Omega are the vehicles.

Comparisons of 1:8 to Exodus 3:14 as well as to the “I am” statements in the Gospel of John are obvious.⁷ Unlike the “I am” statements in the Gospel of John, however, many commentators do not readily identify 1:8 as metaphorical.⁸ However, the fact, that so many writers on the Apocalypse interpret its meaning metaphorically, affirmatively demonstrates an underlying belief that it is, in fact, non-literal. Prior to demonstrating that 1:8 is undeniably non-literal, it is helpful to explore some of these major interpretations.

2.1.1 Overview of Interpretations of I AM the Alpha and Omega

In terms of major interpretations regarding 1:8, there are two primary schools of thoughts extant in contemporary literature.⁹ The first argues that 1:8 is a merism, borrowed from Hebrew literature, which supports God’s sovereignty. The second posits that 1:8 is a polemic against forms of Greek magic by using *nomina sacra*. After reviewing each of these two primary positions, one will explore some additional possibilities.

⁷ Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 87.

⁸ The exception is Roloff, who, regarding 1:8, explicitly writes, “The statement about God begins with a powerfully assertive metaphor: God is the Alpha and the Omega...”, Roloff, *The Revelation of John*, 28.

⁹ One recognizes that a full, historical examination of the interpretation of 1:8 is beyond the scope of this work.

2.1.2 Alpha and Omega as Merism

The dominate voice regarding 1:8 as a merism is G.K. Beale. Beale, following Swete, assumes that the sentence, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” represents a merism,¹⁰ and that it alludes to Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12, where each instance refers to God as the first and the last.¹¹ Here also Beale argues that the Alpha and the Omega are the Greek equivalent to Aleph and Taw merisms that appear in rabbinic literature.¹² After asserting that that 1:8 is a merism, Beale then interprets it to mean that God is sovereign over history.¹³

However, Beale does little other than assert that 1:8 is a merism, which reflects a problem with merisms in general. He does not demonstrate a relationship between a description of the words, that is, a merism, and its actual meaning. For instance, other than asserting an OT allusion, he does not show that Aleph and Taw or Alpha and Omega were conventional terms used for sovereignty in John’s or any other context. This is not to say that Beale is wrong, just that there are gaps in the argument.

That said there are objections to labeling 1:8 as a merism. There is nothing obvious about the Alpha and Omega merism at the grammatical or syntactical echelon that warrants Beale’s

¹⁰ A merism is “The juxtaposition of two elements that represent two extremes in order to suggest everything in between,” Matthew S. DeMoss, s.v. “Merism.” *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

¹¹ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 199. So too Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of Saint John*. Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1906), 10; Roloff, *The Revelation of John*, 28. Brighton simply calls 1:8 a divine title with no explanation, Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation*. Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 4. Boxall states that “it conveys God’s role as the one from whom creation emerges and the goal towards which the cosmos is moving,” Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*. Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 2006), 35. Brown simply asserts that alpha and omega “signal God’s existence at the beginning and the end, Ramond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*. (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 781.

¹² This is a prevailing theme among many commentators. Beale cites John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament III: The Revelation of St. John the Divine*. (Philadelphia: Woodward, 1811), 696. See also David Lincicum, “The Origin of ‘Alpha and Omega’ (Revelation 1.8; 21.6; 22.13): A Suggestion,” *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 6, (2009): 132.

¹³ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 199. So also Alfred Shu-Hsi Suen, “The Beginning of the End: The Presence of God in the Book of Revelation” (Th.M. thesis, Regent College, 1988), 59.

conclusion. There are no formal rules or observable patterns at the language level that require the understanding of a phrase as a merism. One must make this contention from a socio-linguistic perspective, which requires that the argument come from cultural comparisons. All one can conclude, using a formal definition of merism, is that God is not only claiming to be Alpha and Omega, but also Beta through Psi. Therefore, a description of 1:8 as a merism does not necessitate a metaphorical conclusion of sovereignty.

The study of merisms, as above, is a perilous endeavor. They are easy to assert but difficult to identify with certainty. They are often subjective and, as scant work exists on the semantics or grammar of merisms in biblical poetics, especially in Greek, how one should classify or categorize their functions in order to ascertain meaning is problematic.¹⁴ For instance, one must ask whether merisms have literal and non-literal, figurative or non-figurative instances of meaning.¹⁵ This is particularly acute with respect to their potential use as a constituent component of a metaphor.¹⁶ In the case of 1:8 with respect to Isaiah, one must argue that even

¹⁴ In many instances of asserted merism in biblical poetry, the examples include the compared nouns preceded by a preposition and/or an infinite or finite verbal form that is not a verb of being or existence. For example, Potgieter labels Proverbs 3:4, "in the eyes of God and men," as a merism, Johan Hendrik Potgieter, "The (Poetic) Rhetoric of Wisdom in Proverbs 3:1-12," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 58, no. 4 (2002): 1367. Revelation 1:8 contains neither of the above criteria. See also Honeyman's work, where he proposes methodology for identifying merisms in Hebrew texts, but which really fails to offer any syntactic or grammatical evidence, as Potgieter does above, Alexander Mackie Honeyman, "Merismus in Biblical Hebrew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71, no. 1 (March 1952).

¹⁵ Beale's lucid discussion of various interpretations surrounding Revelation 1:19 demonstrate this struggle. While writing about 1:19 in support of Van Unnik, he appeals to 1:8, arguing that it includes multiple merisms, including the statement, *ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, "who is and who was and who is to come," which makes it a rare three-fold merism. The added middle component is a "heightened merism ... to emphasize God's transcendence and sovereignty," Gregory K. Beale, "The Interpretative Problem of Rev. 1:19," *Novum Testamentum* XXXIV, no. 4 (1992): 366. For van Unnik, see Willem C. van Unnik, *Het godspredikaat "Het begin en het einde" bij Flavius Josephus en in de Openbaring van Johannes*. Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde : Nieuwe reeks ; deel 39, no. 1; Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde (1945) ; nieuwe reeks, d. 39, no. 1. (Amsterdam :: Noord-Hollandsche Uitg. Mij., 1976). Beale then states that Rev. 1:19, which reads, "Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this," could likewise be a threefold merism. However, in the article, he traces numerous authors who read these potential merisms quite literally.

¹⁶ For more, see Jože Krašovec, "Merism -- Polar Expression in Biblical Hebrew," *Biblica* 64, no. 2 (1983). See also Jože Krašovec, "The Poetic and Narrative Shape of the Hebrew Bible and Literary Forms of Antithesis," *Religious*

with Beale's comparisons to the Isaiah passages, it is not clear whether Isaiah's merisms are literal or non-literal in meaning.¹⁷ Labeling Revelation 1:8 as a merism, following Isaiah, does not indicate indisputable evidence for the actual meaning of the phrase.

2.1.3 *Alpha and Omega as Nomina Sacra*

The second significant interpretation of 1:8 is that Alpha and Omega is a form of the Greek *nomina sacra*, ΙΑΩ.¹⁸ This line of argument is common, although conclusions vary. Aune suggests that the Alpha and Omega is a divine name drawn from Hellenistic revelatory magic, "where it is an abbreviation of the seven vowels widely believed to constitute a name of the highest God."¹⁹ He also affirms that 1:8 supports God's sovereignty, but he uses a different line of argument than Beale.²⁰

and *Sacred Poetry: An International Quarterly of Religion, Culture, and Education* 1, no. 1 (January-February-March 2013).

¹⁷ For an example of both literal and non-literal possibilities within a single merism, see Johan Hendrik Potgieter, "The (poetic) rhetoric of wisdom in Proverbs 3:1-12," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 58, no. 4 (2002): 1367.

¹⁸ According to Larry Hurtado, "The *nomina sacra* are a collection of words (ultimately fifteen became common) written in special abbreviated forms in Christian sources to indicate their sacred character, Larry W. Hurtado, "The Origin of the Nomina Sacra: A Proposal," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 4 (1998). Whether or not the term *sacra* is a legitimate term is debatable. Heath, while offering disagreement, traces the contention of Tuckett that many abbreviations may just be reading aids since many supposed uses appear in non-sacred texts, Jane Heath, "Nomina Sacra and Sacra Memoria Before the Monastic Age," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 61, no. 2 (October 2010). C.f. Christopher M. Tuckett, "Nomina Sacra: Yes and No," in *The Biblical Canons*, ed. Jean-Marie Auwers and H.J. de Jonge (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003).

¹⁹ Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 59. Luck follows Aune in asserting that 1:8 derives from a form of revelatory magic, arguing it is a form of *dynamis*, "a cosmic force that can either help or hurt ...," and which "... resides in ... utterances (words or names)," Georg Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 6. Speakers invoke these utterances and names apparently as a means of obtaining magical results. For brief differences between religious prayer which seeks divine will and magical commands, which often threaten a divinity, see Manuel Garcia Teijeiro, "Religion and Magic," *Kernos* 6, (1993). Teijeiro's division is also in Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Magic in the Biblical World," *Tyndale Bulletin* 34, (1983): 174-176. Luck writes that an essential difference between religion and magic is that a magus can "achieve a union with the deity ... using the name of a deity to impress lesser daemons," and that the magus "may pretend to be Anubis today or Jesus Christ tomorrow, ad hoc, as it suits him." He continues, stating that this pretending "... is a common type of masquerading in the magical papyri ..." Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, 6. For his part on differences between magic and religion, Shandruk asserts, "There is no reason at this point to entertain any essentialist distinction between the two ..." Walter M. Shandruk, "Christian Use of Magic in Late Antique Egypt," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 42.

²⁰ As to whether John borrows from or is influenced by the various cultural influences of his day, Aune rightly states that, "One of the more fascinating and problematic features of the Apocalypse is the extent to which the author consciously juxtaposed and blended traditions of diverse origin," David E. Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and

Aune's assertions, while certainly worth considering, are not without difficulty. Perhaps most obvious is the fact that Aune appeals to references regarding Alpha and Omega in the Greek Magical Papyri that are of a much later period than the Apocalypse.²¹ All of the references

Graeco-Roman Revelatory Magic," *New Testament Studies* 33, (1987): 481. A copy of this article is republished in Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and Graeco-Roman Revelatory Magic." One of the problems for those claiming John blends magical traditions is the biblical tradition against magic which Yamauchi outlines, Yamauchi, "Magic in the Biblical World," 171-172. Furthermore, it is possible that social and religious traditions, even magical traditions, resist the influence of other traditions, as Griffith and Thompson note that the Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden, an Egyptian document, bears little to no evidence of the influence of anything but Egyptian mythology, Francis Ll. Griffith and Herbert Thompson, eds., *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* (London: H. Grevel & Co., 1904), v. Couple this with the idea that magicians tended to use whatever tradition they believed would help their cause and this makes the Demotic Papyrus quite interesting. If Demotic Magic can resist influence, perhaps John can as well. For the syncretism of magicians, read Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, 6. It is also possible that there is a critical divergence between religious leaders and lay people in such prohibitions and practices, as is noted by Yamauchi, Yamauchi, "Magic in the Biblical World," 171. Aune posits a similar line of argument when writing of the differences between religion and magic as a matter of sociology, stating that "...magic is universally regarded as a form of deviant behavior," and defining magic as "...that form of religious deviance whereby individual or social goals are sought by means alternate to those normally sanctioned by the dominant religious institution," Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity." In this way, Marcus, follower of Valentinus, a Gnostic, may have practiced some sort of magic in seeing "secret harmonies" in the alphabet and the letters of Jesus name, Attilio Mastrocinque, "Creating One's Own Religion: Intellectual Choices," in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007), 388.

²¹ While much of the argumentation here will discuss late sources, it appears that the earliest any alpha omega tradition, or any other uses, could have appeared was the second half of the 7th century B.C. This was the earliest that omega appears in writing and it is likely that it was used only in the localized alphabets of places such as Ionia, Knidos, Paros, and Milos, Roger D. Woodard, "Phoinikeia Grammata: An Alphabet for the Greek Language," in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 39. Woodard argues that prior to that time, alpha was the first letter of the alphabet and tau was the last letter of the alphabet, *ibid.*, 36. Of further interest here is that because the Greek alphabet derived from Phoenician, it contained the letter w, or waw, which functioned in some way as the u. However, Greek later appended the u, calling it upsilon, to the end of the alphabet, making it alpha to upsilon, *ibid.*, 37. This makes one wonder a bit about whether Lucian's work entitled *Trial in the Court of Vowels*, where it seems he is outlining changes in spelling and grammar, and details the struggles between tau, alpha, and upsilon, has anything to do with what Woodard describes above, *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans., H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, 4 vols., vol. 1 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1905), 28. Later Greek alphabets were also divergent from one another, as Old Attic, in the 5th century B.C., began with alpha and ended with chi, while it was Old Ionic that officially adopted an alphabet from alpha to omega for public inscriptions around 402/3 B.C., Philemon Probert, "Phonology," in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 86-87. This means that John's use of alpha and omega likely comes from the Old Ionic tradition. Wachter identifies the addition of the omega to the end of the alphabet as especially from East Greek, Rudolf Wachter, "Inscriptions," in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 54. Dionysius Thrax, a second century B.C. grammarian, called the twenty-four letters of the alphabet that goes from alpha to omega the *grammata*, James I. Porter, "Language as a System in Ancient Rhetoric and Grammar," in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 518. Given the symbolic quality of numbers in Revelation, one wonders if the alpha omega tradition has any relation to the twenty-four elders and other forms of twelve in the book. While not an alpha omega tradition, an alpha to kappa tradition exists within Greek government as a letter including and between these two was ostensibly placed at the top of a *pinakion* (the small bronze card given to citizens). These were placed in a lottery for drawing for jury service in the courts, Domingo Aviles and David C. Mirhady, "Law Courts," in *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, ed. Hans Beck (Malden, MA;

in his commentary are from 3rd and 4th century C.E. documents or later.²² While it is likely that John was familiar with certain forms of Greek magic in his Roman context, one can do no more than speculate that the magical papyri of Roman Egypt, which form the basis of Aune's argumentation, reflect a specific earlier tradition in which an incantation or invocation contained forms of Alpha and Omega.²³

Moreover, the documents to which Aune appeals are of a very different provenance than John's Revelation, Egypt as opposed to Asia Minor.²⁴ This is not to suggest incorrectly that Hellenistic revelatory magic existed only in Egypt, but rather that Aune's attempts to support that similar spells, invocations, or prayers and traditions, which reference Alpha and Omega, existed outside of Egypt and would have influenced John or his audience are not completely convincing.²⁵ More likely, the Greek Magical Papyri evidence a certain tradition within the

Oxford; Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 214-215. In addition, of some interest is that Woodard records that many of the places where the earliest alphabets of Greek were adapted from the Phoenicians were mainly island locations, since this is where the maritime traders interacted. He cites Rhodes, Crete, and Cyprus as examples, Woodard, "Phoinikeia Grammata: An Alphabet for the Greek Language," 39. It would be curious to know how Patmos might fit into the history of alphabet development, if any.

²² Aune references PGM (Papyri Graecae Magicae) IV: 411, 528, 992, 993, 1224, 2351, all of which are 4th century CE; V: 363, 367, also 4th century CE; VII: 476, 720, 3rd or 4th century CE; XIII: 849-59, 931, 4th century CE; finally, XLIV, an undated illustration. See Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 57. Dates are from Hans Dieter Betz, ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells*, Second ed. (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), xxiii-xxv. Twelftree argues, following Eshel, that Greek magical texts influenced first-century Palestine, and, at least as far as magical exorcisms were concerned, the earliest Christians would have been familiar with the texts and the practices, Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism Among Early Christians*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 36, 39. In addition, Shandruk argues that despite denials of the use of magic amongst Christians by Origen, Eusebius, and Chrysostom, its use among Christians in late antique Egypt is common, although he admits that defining "Christian" is difficult. His article could tacitly support a provincial kind of Christianity within Egypt, though it still comes later than John, Shandruk, "Christian Use of Magic in Late Antique Egypt," esp. 50-57.

²³ Contra Lincicum, "The Origin of 'Alpha and Omega' (Revelation 1.8; 21.6; 22.13): A Suggestion."

²⁴ Aune seems aware of potential issues of provenance and date as he writes, Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and Graeco-Roman Revelatory Magic," 349-350.

²⁵ That such magic affected certain Christians in Egypt is indisputable, as is amply demonstrated by Marvin W. Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999). Macleod and Mees demonstrate the use of the full title, "Alpha and Omega," in Christian amulets of northern Europe circa the 12th century CE, Mindy Macleod and Bernard Mees, *Runic Amulets and Magic Objects*. (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2006), 192. One title that more likely fits the concept of divine polemic is the appended description in 1:8, the one who was, is, and is to come. Pausanias, 10.12.10, describes the priestesses of Dodona singing a hymn which proclaims, "Ζεὺς ἦν, Ζεὺς ἐστίν, Ζεὺς ἔσσεται," Zeus was, Zeus is, and Zeus shall be," see Pausanias, "Pausania Graeciae Descriptio,"

context of certain provenance, Egypt, at a certain period.²⁶ It appears more than the evidence bears to assume these texts or traditions influence John consciously or subconsciously.²⁷

Lincicum suggests one should abandon arguments against Aune based on date due to the spells reflecting earlier traditions, yet offers little evidence of this assertion. He ties together arguments concerning the early presence of ΙΑΩ as a Greek substitute for the Tetragrammaton and indicates this is likely what John has in mind. His work reflects the same difficulty as Aune's in that it is highly speculative to associate the Tetragrammaton and ΙΑΩ, and Lincicum goes one

(Leipzig: Teubner, 1903).

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0159%3Abook%3D10%3Achapter%3D12%3Asection%3D10> (accessed 1 November 2013). Although Pausanias' Greek differs slight from John, which reads, "ὁ ὢν, ὁ ᾗν, ὁ ἐρχόμενος," the similarities are obvious. Pausanias' book 10 dates to the late 2nd century CE, though he claims the hymn originates much earlier. Unfortunately, there is little corroborating evidence for this. Mounce, likely using Goodwin's translation of Plutarch's *Morals*, notes the shrine of Minerva at Sais records the words, "I am all that hath been and is and shall be," Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 68; Plutarch, "*Plutarch's Morals*," ed. William W. Goodwin (Cambridge Press of John Wilson: Little, Brown, and Company, 1874).

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0240%3Asection%3D9> (accessed 19 November 2014). Heinemann, refers to her as Athena or Isis, Frank Cole Babbitt, "*De Iside et Osiride*," ed. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, William Heinemann Ltd., 1936).

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0239%3Asection%3D9>. The Greek of that inscription reads, ἐγὼ εἰμι πᾶν τὸ γεγονὸς καὶ ὄν καὶ ἐσόμενον, Plutarch, "*Moralia*"

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0238%3Asection%3D9> (accessed 19 November 2014).

²⁶ Other than the use of the Greek OT outside of Egypt, demonstrating that the cultural norms of one ancient place influence another in these substantial ways is difficult to prove.

²⁷ Aune proposes that the magical traditions, "have been taken up consciously by John and fashioned into an anti-magic apologetic," Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and Graeco-Roman Revelatory Magic," 481. Thomas believes that the influence of Egypt made its way to Asia Minor and thus influenced John, but admits the ambiguity of the assertion, Thomas, *Magical Motifs in the Book of Revelation*, 3. However, c.f. Kousoulis, who writes that mainstream Greek and Roman culture prohibited and despised magic, which caused a culture clash with the influence of Greek in Egypt under the Ptolemies. In Egyptian culture, magic was still quite orthodox. It appears from Kousoulis that these attitudes apparently continued in John's day, I. M. Panagiotis Kousoulis, "Magic in Greco-Roman Egypt: The Semiotics of a Gradual Interpenetration of Egyptian and Greek Ritual Beliefs," *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 2, no. 2 (2002). Moreover, Kousoulis indicates that the Egyptians resisted sharing their secrets regarding magic with foreigners, making it more difficult to imagine its spread and influence in Asia Minor. One wonders here, without being too critical of the astounding scholar Aune, if in this instance one does not find a parallel to what Orlinsky calls Winckler's "Pan-Babylonian-Hittite" obsession. Orlinsky sees Winckler as potentially obsessed that parallels between the OT and literature of the ANE were surely acts of intentional borrowing and could not see beyond this thesis, Harry M. Orlinsky, "Wither Biblical Research?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90, no. 1 (1971): 8. Finding their arguments unconvincing, one may contend that John cannot use what may not exist in his time or provenance. A form of illicit, Hellenistic magic may have existed. However, whether the Egyptian magic texts influenced John remains ambiguous.

step further in asserting that Alpha and Omega is John's exegesis of $\text{IA}\Omega$, that is, John really meant Ἰησοῦς ἀλφά ω , and thus John has in mind the divine name.²⁸

If correct, one would have to change 1:8 to read, "Jesus is the Alpha and Omega", instead of, "I am the Alpha and the Omega." Rather than self-disclosure on the part of God, it is a declarative statement, made by God about Jesus. This goes too far in adding interpretive layers beyond what textual evidence supports.

Additionally, Lincicum's argument is speculative in that the association of the Tetragrammaton with $\text{IA}\Omega$ occurs in only one known document prior to the time of John, that is the Qumran document 4Q120 also called 4QLXXLev^b, which Howard dates to the first century B.C.²⁹ Containing sections from Lev. 1-5, it possesses one clear reference to $\text{IA}\Omega$ in Lev. 4:27, or line 4 of this particular segment,³⁰ and, depending on the editor, eleven reconstructed references, ten of which are entirely speculative (1:11, line 3; 2:3, line 1; 3:11, line 10; 3:13, line 12; 3:14, line 2; 4:3, line 2; 4:4, line 2; 4:7, line 8; 5:19, line 6; 5:21, line 9), and the other one a near certainty (3:12, line 12).³¹

Providing only one document with two potential citations, Howard overreaches in concluding, "In pre-Christian Greek MSS of the OT, the divine name normally appears not in the

²⁸ Lincicum, "The Origin of 'Alpha and Omega' (Revelation 1.8; 21.6; 22.13): A Suggestion," 129-130.

²⁹ George Howard, "The Tetragram and the New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96, no. 1 (March 1977): 65. In addition to Lincicum and Howard, Hurtado also appeals to this scroll, Hurtado, "The Origin of the Nomina Sacra: A Proposal," 662. Lincicum also draws support for the apparent widespread use of $\text{IA}\Omega$ from the Apocalypse of Abraham 10:8, which he quotes as reading "I am Iaoel and I was called so by him who causes those with me on the seventh expanse, on the firmament, to shake, a power through the medium of his ineffable name in me," Lincicum, "The Origin of 'Alpha and Omega' (Revelation 1.8; 21.6; 22.13): A Suggestion," 131. This reference is also noted by George H. Box, *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1919). <http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/box.pdf> (accessed 28 October 2015).

³⁰ Howard states that 4QLXXLev^b possesses two references to $\text{IA}\Omega$, presumably 4:27 and 3:12, although he does not indicate, Howard, "The Tetragram and the New Testament," 65.

³¹ *4Q120 Septuagint Leviticus b.* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2010). This Lexham Press copy of 4Q120 is a reconstruction itself and not a copy of the original fragments. When considering originals, the reference in 3:12 is less certain, as Skehan notes that the original fragment contains only the final omega and enough of the alpha to preclude any other word, Patrick W. Skehan, "The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint," *BIOSCS* 13, (1980): 29.

form of κύριος, as it does in the great Christian codices of the LXX known today, but either in the form of the Hebrew Tetragram (written in Aramaic or Paleo-Hebrew letters) or in the transliterated form of ΙΑΩ.”³² One document hardly represents the claim, “normally appears,” and therefore one should not equate the two types of sources Howard references.

As for Howard’s first assertion about pre-Christian manuscripts not using the Greek κύριος, Lord, for the divine name, but instead the Tetragram, Norris argues that this also applies to Christian manuscripts.³³ Norris argues based on quotes in Gregory of Nazianzen that the Tetragram, even in Greek texts, appears in Paleo-Hebrew script. If this was the accepted practice, it seems just as odd that John would use an exegesis of ΙΑΩ rather than a Hebrew equivalent of the divine name written in Paleo-Hebrew. However, the NT does not reflect any of these practices, instead using κύριος and θεός.

When considering the argument of *nomina sacra*, one must consider the grammar and syntax of the Greek sentence as well. For instance, as noted in the introduction, Greek proper names generally occupy the place of the subject in a sentence, except, in the case of a copulative, when a pronoun displaces them. In 1:8, the first-person pronoun predictably displaces the Alpha and Omega. However, given that they are articular, Wallace states that, propositionally, the pronoun and the articular Alpha and Omega are thus interchangeable. Nevertheless, a proposition is not what John has in mind.

What also makes this syntax significant is the role of the first-person pronoun and its antecedent. God, as the antecedent, is taking the title for himself. What Aune and others must demonstrate is that if the Alpha and Omega is some permutation of the *nomina sacra*, that

³² Howard, "The Tetragram and the New Testament," 71.

³³ Frederick W. Norris, "The Tetragrammaton in Gregory of Nazianzen," *Vigiliae Christianae* 43, no. 4 (1989): 340.

evidence exists of God or gods using such permutations to refer to themselves in such copulative constructions within a narrative framework. It appears that the permutations of divine names to which Aune refers are titles or names used by a speaker or narrator when either referring to a god or pretending to be a god, but not by the gods themselves.³⁴

Of similar significance is the macro-context of the Apocalypse. Although John rarely uses the copulative sentence with a first-person pronoun in his metaphors, further maintaining the uniqueness of 1:8, when he does, he does so with consistency, as 1:17, 21:6³⁵, and 22:16 all follow similar constructions.³⁶ In each case, John records God or Jesus speaking in the first person and using the first person Ἐγὼ εἰμι, possibly for emphasis. Following the subject and verb, each of the predicates in John's copulae are arthrous, something that eludes the permutations in the magical papyri.

³⁴ Even in *PGM* III: 361, where the speaker chants, "I am AEHIOY [Ω AEHIOYΩ] ...," the context does not reflect anything similar in Revelation. John is not acting in a way, in the words of Aune, where "a magician pretends to be deity," Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 57. Rather, in the Apocalypse, God himself uses this title. This same phenomenon occurs in the title, "who is, who was, and who is to come," at the end of 1:8, where God continues speaking. It makes sense that God would have no need for permutations in self-disclosure. He would have no need to invoke his own name to acquire power.

³⁵ One must note here that 21:6 is the only one of the four passages that has textual instability regarding εἰμι. UBS5 includes it here because of the real possibility that it is original here and only later omitted. The Greek New Testament places εἰμι in brackets, which indicates a C rating, meaning the word "may be regarded as part of the text, but that in the present state of New Testament textual scholarship this cannot be taken as completely certain," Aland, Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini, and Metzger, eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 7*. Part of the difficulty of the editors is that 1:8 includes εἰμι, which would make 21:6 in harmony with it, but 22:13 omits it, instead reading ἐγὼ τὸ Ἀλφά. It may also be that, given the poetic nature of these words as one discusses below, the author omits the verb as a means of ellipses. For this phenomenon in Hebrew poetry, see Cynthia L. Miller, "A Linguistic Approach to Ellipses in Biblical Poetry," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 13, no. 2 (2003). She specifically refers to the circumstance of verbal ellipsis as "elision," *ibid.*, 253.

³⁶ This is not to say exact. All the comparisons above contain a subject, verb (or implied verb), and predicate. However, the grammar of the predicate varies; 1:8 begins pronoun + verb + predicate noun (I am the Alpha, I am the Omega), moves to implied subject pronoun + implied verb + predicate participle (I am the one who is), implied subject pronoun + implied verb + finite verb functioning as a predicate participle (I am the one who was), implied subject pronoun + implied verb + predicate participle (I am the one who is coming), and finally ends with implied subject pronoun + implied verb + predicate noun (I am the Almighty). 1:17 uses the subject pronoun + verb + predicate adjective (I am the first), and concludes with implied subject pronoun + implied verb + predicate adjective (I am the last). 21:6 uses a subject pronoun or implied pronoun + verb or implied verb + and predicate nouns for each of its four comparisons. 22:16 is the most complex of the "I am" statements in Revelation, using pronoun + verb + predicate noun (I am the root), implied pronoun + implied verb + predicate noun + genitive descriptor (I am the descendant of David), and implied pronoun + implied verb + predicate noun + attributive adjective + attributive adjective (I am the star, the bright one, the morning one; or more smoothly, I am the bright and morning star).

Finally, while one does not support Aune's conclusions, his process is partially consistent with metaphor comprehension in that he appears to be searching for socio-historical grounds for understanding how John's audience may have understood the Alpha Omega reference. It is difficult to assess whether Aune's conclusion that Alpha and Omega are permutations of the divine name is metaphorical or not. One concludes that even if it is a permutation, Alpha and Omega, with respect to Jesus or to God, must be metaphorical.

However, and quite ironically, if it is a metaphor, by not making a deeper search of the possible OT influence of this metaphor and the subsequent analogical associations in the OT, rather than rooting the metaphor via socio-historical means, Aune may be making the metaphor more open than John's context allows.

From the standpoint of metaphor, it is possible that what Aune is doing is following the process of what Black calls the "system of associated commonplaces."³⁷ Black writes that in interpreting metaphor, what one is doing when using associated commonplaces is considering all of what a culture may hold true about a subject, such as wolves, whether it is true or not, and applying it towards a metaphor.³⁸

If a culture holds that wolves are ferocious meat-eaters or scavengers, then to use wolf in a metaphor like "the man is a wolf," is to activate a "wolf-system" of related commonplaces.³⁹

One may apply any of the ferocious qualities of the wolf to the man and in fact, one could apply

³⁷ Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 40. For more on Black's system of associated commonplaces, see also Black, "Metaphor." Reimer and Camp note that the associated common places do not even need to be true, they just need to be true in the way they are perceived, Reimer and Camp, "Metaphor," 853-854. E.g. they write of a wolf being ruthless. Ruthless is a moral term and wolves are non-moral.

³⁸ Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 40. The issue of objective truth is not really the point here. If a culture believes something to be true about the wolf, then they are more likely to use such features in metaphor.

³⁹ Ibid. Black argues that "to deny any such piece of accepted commonplace (e.g. by saying that wolves are vegetarians – or easily domesticated) is to produce an effect of paradox and provoke a demand for justification," *ibid.*

any qualities of the wolf, not just the ferocious ones, to the man. Black supposes that in the process, “A suitable hearer will be led by the wolf-system of implications to construct a corresponding system of implications about the principal subject.” These implications, Black continues, are not those one normally integrates with the literal uses of the word man, but rather the implications come from associations normally made regarding the literal uses of the word wolf.⁴⁰

In the case of the Alpha and Omega in an Egyptian or Hellenistic magic context, one would apparently have to assume that the author activates a magical “vowel-system” or “alphabet system” or “phonological-system” and that the system of implications surrounding these potential systems are applicable to the “I” in the permutation of I am the Alpha and Omega. Just what these implications are, Aune does not say or fully define. He is explaining the way in which he believes John used the permutation, but not necessarily the meaning of its use.

If this is the sort of process he is following, knowingly or unknowingly, there is still the problem of metaphoric meaning transferring between cultures. Black concludes that because commonplaces are rooted in a culture, “a metaphor that works in one society may seem preposterous in another.”⁴¹ Thus, the burden remains to demonstrate that John’s audience in some way shares such cultural similarity with Egyptian revelatory magic that the metaphor would not be preposterous to his listeners.

This burden is greater considering the assertion by Beale and McDonough that “no other book of the NT is as permeated by the OT as is Revelation.”⁴² Various scholars, as outlined by

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² G.K. Beale and Sean M. McDonough, “Revelation,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 1081. They note that UBS 3rd edition of the Greek NT counts 394 OT references and the Nestle Aland 26th edition of the Greek NT has 635. Paulien includes a near identical statement as that of Beale and McDonough, stating, “No book of the New Testament is as saturated with the Old as is the Apocalypse,” Jon Paulien, “Criteria and the

Beale and McDonough, propose between 394 to 1000 OT references, depending on their criteria for the prospective reference.⁴³ It seems then that one would need to argue thoroughly against the OT as the seedbed for any reference, to say nothing of the NT, particularly when conceiving an Egyptian or Hellenistic influence.

Although one uses the commonplaces approach in the methodology of this dissertation, one is also aware of certain drawbacks. For instance, Kittay notes the potential qualities that could be applied from a predicate to a subject “must be indefinite and perhaps infinite.”⁴⁴ One agrees with Kittay only in the case of decontextualized sentences, however, as the context constrains the qualities that one associates between predicate and subject.

In the case of Rev. 1:8, even if the alpha omega metaphor were from Egyptian revelatory magic, there is not enough cultural context or literary co-text to constrain the meaning of the metaphor. The lack of adequate context and co-text makes it nearly impossible to ascertain what the magician fully intends by invoking the name, rendering the metaphor meaningless.

By exploring literary contexts and socio-historical as well as socio-religious contexts more closely correlating with the Apocalypse, a better understanding of this metaphor is likely, as these constrain and guide meaning.

Assessment of Allusions to the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation," in *Studies in the Book of Revelation*, ed. Steve Moyise (Edinburgh; New York: T&T Clark, 2001), 113. Paulien also recognizes that Beale was the first scholar to take seriously efforts to outline criteria for examining possible OT references in Revelation in his PhD dissertation, later published as, Gregory K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John*. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984). Archer and Chirichigno, while admittedly dealing only with ostensible quotations, are outliers, counting only eight OT quotations in Revelation as found in 2:26-27 (Psalm 2:9), 6:16 (Hos. 10:8), 7:17 (Isa. 25:8), 11:11 (Ezek. 37:5, 10), 15:3 (Ps. 111:2), 15:4 (Ps. 86:9), 20:9 (2 Kgs. 1:10, 12), 21:7 (2 Sam. 7:14, and possibly Ezek. 11:20), Gleason L. Archer and Gregory Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), xxii.

⁴³ Beale and McDonough, "Revelation," 1082. Paulien believes that one of the difficulties in assessing John's use of the OT lies in the tri-lingual nature of Palestine, where John grew up. While Revelation is written in Greek, he thinks that it was "profoundly influenced by Hebrew and Aramaic thought-patterns," Paulien, "Criteria and the Assessment of Allusions to the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation," 113-114. This could account for the lack of exact quotes.

⁴⁴ Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, 182.

2.1.4 Other Potential Sources of Alpha and Omega

If one is willing to accept that ordinary Christians were influenced by magic, and that even some of the earliest Christian texts like Revelation contained polemics against magic, then perhaps more intriguing than Aune's argument of the influence of Egyptian or Hellenistic magic, and even more so than 1:8 as influenced by possible evidence of *nomina sacra*, at least in this author's opinion, is the discovery of the SATOR-ROTAS square at Pompeii as illustrated here:⁴⁵

S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

Yamauchi writes of this puzzle appearing on Christian amulets found not only in Pompeii, but also much later in Portugal and England.⁴⁶ Wilson indicates that while the exact origin of the inscription is unknown, it is likely of Jewish or Christian origin. If it is of Christian origin, he argues it uses Latin letters and words, which, when rearranged, spell out *Pater Noster*. These are also the first two words of the Lord's Prayer, and *A* and *O* are Latin representations of the Greek alpha and omega.⁴⁷

If the inscription means what Wilson says it does, and if it was inscribed prior to the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79, then it provides not only potential evidence of Christians in Pompeii as Wilson addresses, but it is also the earliest evidence of something like an alpha and

⁴⁵ Wilson records that archaeologists uncovered the inscription on a column on November 12, 1936, Floyd V. Wilson, "Were There Christians in Pompeii," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 2, no. 2 (May 1939): 15.

⁴⁶ Yamauchi, "Magic in the Biblical World," 198.

⁴⁷ Wilson, "Were There Christians in Pompeii," 15-16. What neither Yamauchi nor Wilson address is that the Latin alphabet ends with Z, not O, meaning there occurs some interpretation from Greek. For brief background to this, read Frederick F. Bruce, "The Origin of the Alphabet," *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 80, (1948).

omega tradition, albeit in Latin, from which John may have drawn.⁴⁸ In the end, the inscription is interesting, but too speculative for sound conclusions.

Unfortunately, for researchers using English, R.D. Hicks' English translation of Diogenes Laertius gives false hope of another possibility for evidence of an early Alpha Omega tradition. Laertius supposedly records an epistle of Epicurus to Menoeceus. In what appears to be an encouragement to attain wisdom, wisdom is the pursuit of happiness and we are told in translation that, "we must exercise ourselves in the things which brings happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed toward attaining it."⁴⁹ Later, Epicurus continues writing, "When we are pained because of the absence of pleasure, then, and then only, do we feel the need of pleasure. Wherefore we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a blessed life. Pleasure is our first and kindred good."⁵⁰

While this association seems like it might yield fruit of an early alpha and omega tradition, albeit later than John,⁵¹ and in a context where the author uses it as a surface metaphor, an examination of the epistle in Greek demonstrates parallels not to the alpha and omega, but rather to ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος, "beginning and end," the other title The Apocalypse associates with alpha and omega. In one's opinion, Hicks does not carefully translate these words. One can use it

⁴⁸ To say earliest here is assuming a late date for The Apocalypse of the mid-90's C.E. For those who argue the date of Revelation as prior to 70 C.E., Revelation would still possibly be the earliest evidence of the tradition. For more on the date of Revelation, see footnotes above. Neither Yamauchi nor Wilson seem aware of the potential issues of this inscription has for Revelation's date or its testament to a tradition prior to The Apocalypse. Yamauchi assumes it refers to Revelation, but if there is a late date to Revelation, then the inscription cannot refer to Revelation, because Revelation did not yet exist, Yamauchi, "Magic in the Biblical World," 198.

⁴⁹ Diogenes Laertius, *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. ed. E. Capps, T.E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, trans., R.D. Hicks, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 2 (London; New York: William Heinemann; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 649.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 655.

⁵¹ Diogenes Laertius writes in the 3rd century A.D., see abbreviations section in Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964). Although Epicurus was much earlier, it impossible to know whether Diogenes has recorded an authentic epistle or not. For Epicurus dates of 342-270 B.C., see Frank L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Third Revised ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 556.

as a parallel for John's beginning and end in Revelation 21:6, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος, but it is not technically an alpha omega comparison.

2.1.5 Conclusion to the Meaning of Alpha and Omega

Sadly, there is little to no current evidence that God's dictum recorded in Revelation 1:8 exists prior to or in parallel with John's usage.⁵² While many speculate that God's title, and later that of Jesus, is rooted in the aleph tau merisms of Hebrew poetry, this is more than the evidence bears. Although segments of Hebrew scripture, like Lev. 26:3-13 use aleph and tau in a poetic structure, the fact remains that a title or dictum using the words Alpha and Omega in this proximity or context does not exist. Furthermore, none of John's references using Alpha and Omega, in 1:8, 21:6, or 22:13 are acrostic poems, as are many of the aleph and tau references in Hebrew poetry. Finally, as noted above those places in Greek literature where the terms or letters Alpha and Omega do occur in such a proximity and comparatively similar contexts are of much later dates than John is.⁵³

⁵² Halcomb stretches the evidence for the use of Alpha and Omega in extra biblical literature, erroneously citing Martial, Epigrammata 5.26, which says nothing about the alpha and omega, but, in fact, references alpha and beta. Additionally, Holcomb references Tertullian, Cyprian, Paulinus of Nola, and Prudentius, all of whom are substantially later than John and interpret him, rather than vice versa, see T. Michael W. Holcomb, s.v. "Alpha and Omega." ed. John D. Berry and Lazarus Wentz, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2012).

⁵³ Although this section does not explore the early patristic tradition that Revelation 1:8 began, the previous note correctly reminds the reader that the patristic tradition is of necessity later than John is. In addition to Patristic evidence, Williams illustrates evidence of a firmly entrenched alpha omega tradition derived from John, as found on Roman coins of the 4th century CE, namely those of Magnentius, Jonathon Williams, "Religion and Roman Coins," in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), 160. Francese and Smith note the practice of slave owners of placing collars on slaves with a "propensity to run away." They often include words such as "arrest me and return me because I have fled." In one example, a collar reads, "I am of Hilario. Arrest me and return me because I have fled from Region XII near the bath of Scriboniolus, Rome," under which were the "Christian symbols alpha and omega," Christopher Francese and R. Scott Smith, eds., *Ancient Rome: An Anthology of Sources* (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 2014), 477-478. Hornbury and Noy indicate that the symbols alpha and omega were also inscribed on a Jewish (convert to Christianity) tombstone in Egypt for a Sousana, although they do not give a date, William Hornbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*. (Cambridge; New York; Oakleigh, AU: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 18.

While the apocalyptic “I am” statement in 1:8 may be a merism or a polemic against magic, it is most probably a distinct metaphor whose genesis is the Apocalypse. If, in fact, its origin is Revelation, then one needs to address some distinction or qualification regarding this metaphor as either living or dead.

Dead metaphors, according to Fraser, are now idioms that were once live metaphors.⁵⁴ He offers, by way of example, the phrase “to kick the bucket,” which he says was once used literally, then metaphorically, but now has become so conventionalized that it “has lost any sense of its original source.”⁵⁵

A live metaphor, on the other hand, is one that requires “both a context and a certain creativity to interpret adequately.”⁵⁶ Here one argues that the alpha and omega metaphor, although ancient by modern standards, is still very much a living metaphor. Aside from creativity, it requires several layers of context to grasp its significance.

It primarily requires a theological context and a specifically Christian monotheistic context. As it relates to God, anyone without a theological framework will most likely struggle to identify the metaphor. Although one will show later that its meaning intimately relates to the text of Isaiah and its claims are rooted in Israelite monotheism, modern Jews unfamiliar with Christian scripture will not readily identify its meaning either.

Within the Christian context, individuals must be aware of the book of Revelation and further aware of the metaphor’s intertextuality with the OT book of Isaiah and its socio-religious claims as rooted in Jewish monotheism.

⁵⁴ Bruce Fraser, “The Interpretation of Novel Metaphors,” in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 330.

⁵⁵ Its original source, apparently, is that of an animal lashed by the feet to a beam called a bucket, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

From the creative standpoint, one must put aside the forced theological context of Reformed theology and its insistence in seeing sovereignty behind every passage. While one would not necessarily disagree with claims of the sovereignty of God, the Bible presents God as a multifaceted being with innumerable states of being and possessing vast qualities and characteristics. Allowing the text to demonstrate these various qualities requires creativity and openness. Thus, I am the Alpha and the Omega is still a living metaphor whereby God is not literally or ontologically two Greek letters, nor is He, as a simple definition of merism would indicate, literally all the letters in between.

In support of this assertion of metaphor, one returns to Van der Watt. In his exploration of John 15:1, Van der Watt demonstrates that when Jesus states, “I am the true vine,” the pronoun ἐγώ, I, requires a human attribute, whereas vine is inanimate or nonhuman.⁵⁷ This incongruence, as argued in the introduction, creates the grammatical and syntactical environment necessary for a metaphor and the same situation occurs in Revelation 1:8. The pronoun, ἐγώ, requires a human, divine, or animate attribute and letters of the Greek alphabet do not fit this criterion. In fact, this issue alone separates the Alpha and the Omega from the remainder of God’s self-disclosure in 1:8. When he states, “I am the one who is, I am the one who was, I am the one who is coming (or to come), I am the Almighty,” none of these copulative sentences exhibit the incongruence of animate and inanimate like Alpha and Omega.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 31.

⁵⁸ While many English translations leave the three predicates separate from their subject and verb, the full translations are appropriate. While Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 24., argues this is an indeclinable divine name, it is possible to understand each of the participles functioning as predicate adjectives given their use in a dependent clause and the fact they are arthrous, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 617-621. If they are a divine title, they would have to be nominative absolutes or pendant nominatives, *ibid.*, 49-53.

Therefore, 1:8 may be a merism and may even be some polemic against Greek magic. One is not attempting to posit that the theory here is the only one or the absolute one. But the theory here does argue that 1:8 is most certainly a metaphor, and thus whether merism or permutation, one should also observe the processes and methods of interpreting metaphor.⁵⁹

Acknowledging that 1:8 is a metaphor, and given the proximity of the vehicle and tenor in the immediate micro-context, this is an example of an explicit surface metaphor.⁶⁰ Thus, the Alpha and Omega are metaphoric titles, which may or may not utilize a merism and which may be the origin for later uses of nomina sacra which bear likeness to 1:8, but they are not intended as nomina sacra themselves.

As a metaphor, Ἐγώ εἰμι, I am, acts as the tenor and τὸ Ἀλφά καὶ τὸ Ὠ, the Alpha and the Omega, are the vehicles. It is necessary to note that there are multiple vehicles in this metaphor, or one may even say there are multiple metaphors, though the tenor is the same in each sentence. One could restate the sentences to read, “I am the Alpha and I am the Omega.” Two comparisons, rather than one, exist.⁶¹

In his example of “I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener,” and “I am the vine, you are the branches,” from John 15:1 and 15:5 respectively, van der Watt writes of “A multi-level basis of communication,” in which the writer associates Jesus with the vine, disciples with the branches and the Father with a gardener.”⁶² As this association takes place with the literal and figurative levels in parallel, it allows at the figurative level a replacement or substitution to

⁵⁹ However, this writer does not really believe Greek magic plays a role in John’s use of the term.

⁶⁰ See 17:9

⁶¹ This means that 1:8 is not a hendiadys, defined by Young as, “...the expression of one idea with two or more similar words; that is, two words are used for the same thing.” He gives as an example that “Judas left vacant this ministry and apostleship (Acts 1:25),” Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 243. There is no incongruence or contextual markers indicating a metaphor in Young’s example. Alpha and omega are not different words for the same thing, but rather vehicles in metaphors.

⁶² Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 35.

take place. One can replace vine with Jesus, branches with disciples, and Father with gardener. He calls this metaphorical substitution as the literal phrases draw the figurative phrases into a comparison, that of vine farming.⁶³ Van der Watt continues by arguing that this substitution occurs on the “basis of analogy,” where the “vine’s relation to the branches is analogous to Jesus’ relation to his people ...”⁶⁴

In the same way, Alpha and Omega are associated with I, that is, the Lord God, and at the figurative level can serve as a replacement or substitution for God, although John doesn’t seem to do this later in his text. The literal draws the figurative into an analogous comparison whereby one analogously compares the relationship of Alpha and Omega to the Greek alphabet to God and his relationship to something. Whereas the vine illustration from John 15 is more explicit in allowing one to determine what relationships are analogous, the relationship of God is still a mystery, if the sentence stands alone.

Within the immediate co-text, which analogy, qualities, or comparisons the readers make between God and Alpha and Omega are vague.⁶⁵ It is only when comparing 1:8 to 21:6 or 22:13⁶⁶ that one comes to see Alpha and Omega as aligned with “the first and the last,” and “the beginning and the end.”⁶⁷ In this way, John extends the metaphorical structure using the implied

⁶³ Ibid., 36.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ This is not to say that the approach here is only one of comparison and not interaction, See Isabel D’Hanis, “A Logical Approach to the Analysis of Metaphors,” in *Logical and Computational Aspects of Model-Based Reasoning Applied Logic Series*, ed. Nancy J. Nersessian Lorenzo Magnani, Claudio Pizzi (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002).

⁶⁶ 22:13 is distinct from 1:8 in that it does not include the verb εἶμι. Aune demonstrates that much later manuscripts attempt to harmonize the two verses, Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1197. The NA28 list of variants supports Aune’s assertion of harmonization, Nestle, Nestle, Aland, Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini, Metzger, Münster, and Textforschung, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 788.

⁶⁷ Van Kooten understands the phrase, “Alpha and Omega,” in 1:8 and 21:6-7, to form an *inclusio* within the Apocalypse emphasizing victory, George H. van Kooten, “The Year of the Four Emperors and the Revelation of John: the ‘pro-Neronian’ Emperors Otho and Vitellius, and the Images and Colossus of Nero in Rome,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30, no. 2 (2007): 238. Although not focused on the theme of victory, Osborne also discusses the *inclusio*, Osborne, *Revelation*, 71. Bauckham sees these phrases as equivalent and that they function as

subject and verb. For instance, these sentences may also read, “I am the first and I am the last,” and “I am the beginning and I am the end.”⁶⁸ One can then make a comparison between these statements: “I am the Alpha,” equals, “I am the first,” and “I am the beginning,” and “I am the Omega,” equals “I am the last,” and “I am the end.” While the “I” remains in the same in the interaction between the three lines, alpha relates to first and beginning while omega relates to last, and end. All the statements serve as a form of synonymous parallelism, each line reinforcing and defining the other.⁶⁹

One can see the comparison in the following parallel, as well as the number of syllables:⁷⁰

Ἐγώ εἰμι	τὸ Ἀλφά	καὶ	τὸ Ὡ	[12] Revelation 1:8
2+2	1+2	1	1+1 [1+3]	[10] ⁷¹
Ἐγώ εἰμι	ὁ πρῶτος	καὶ	ὁ ἔσχατος	[12] Revelation 1:17
2+2	1+2	1	1+3	

a means of divine self-disclosure by Jesus, since both Jesus and God self-identify with them, Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 26.

⁶⁸ In 1:17, one could take the words of the one like a son of man to read, “I am the first, I am the last, and I am the living one.” The addition of the predicate participle “living one,” mirrors 1:8 where God uses the predicate participles, “I am the one who is,” and “I am the one who is coming.”

⁶⁹ For a brief introduction to synonymous parallelism and other forms of parallelism, particularly in Hebrew literature and Hebrew poetry, see David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 18-19. See also Kim Williams Bodenhamer, s.v. “Poetry, Biblical.” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015). Dorsey defines synonymous parallelism as when “...the second line repeats the basic idea of the first line...” and antithetic parallelism as when “...the second line contrasts the basic idea of the first line...” and synthetic parallelism as when “...the second line in one way or another furthers the thought of the first line...” Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi*, 18. Greidanus writes that parallelism aids in memory but also emphasizes and presents the point from different angles, Sydney Greidanus, s.v. “Preaching From Paul Today.” ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 740.

⁷⁰ Similarly, Van der Watt writes of comparison through parallel with respect to John 15:4, Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 40.

⁷¹ The Ὡ is one syllable but vocally or phonetically, many pronounce it as three.

Ἐγώ εἰμι	ἡ ἀρχή	καὶ	τὸ τέλος	[11] Revelation 21:6
2+2	1+2	1	1+2	

All three then appear together, in this sequence, in Revelation 22:13, although John uses the pronoun and verb only to introduce the first line.⁷² When one places these lines as above, in such a way as to demonstrate the comparison by syntactic position, Berlin calls this parallelism by syntactic equivalence.⁷³ Each possesses the use of the nominative singular first person personal pronoun, followed by the present active indicative verb of being. The verb precedes the coordinating conjunction separating two nominative singular predicates.⁷⁴ The first two sentences are identical in syllabic rhythm containing twelve syllables while the final line contains eleven.

The syntactic parallelism Berlin describes occurs in this instance through *isocolon*,⁷⁵ another regular feature that John poetically uses in the Apocalypse.⁷⁶ This *isocolon* is just one of

⁷² John seems to have a propensity for three stanza parallels as demonstrated in two of his hymns in Rev. 4:11 and 7:10. For more on syllables in the rhythm of three stanza hymns see Fred Hansen, "The Hymns of Revelation: Theological Refrains in the Apocalypse," in *Dragons, John, and Every Grain of Sand: Essays on the Book of Revelation in Honor of Dr. Robert Lowery*, ed. Shane J. Wood (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2011), 61.

⁷³ Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, ed. Astrid B. Beck and David Noel Freedman, The Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 27. Parallelism, is, by her definition, "...a matter of equivalences (or correspondences) and contrasts ... or ... contrasts within equivalences." She later writes of the various forms of syntactic parallelisms that exist within Biblical Hebrew, *ibid.*, 53ff. While she does include a category labeled subject-object parallelisms within syntactic parallels, she does not label a subject-predicate parallelism, as would be necessary here. For more on categories of parallelism, such as synthetic, synonymous, and antithetical, read James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History*. (Baltimore; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 12ff.

⁷⁴ The use of conjunctions in NT parallelism is not, according to Longman, a shared feature with OT Hebrew poetry. He argues that conjunctions used in poetry, particularly prose, are likely later insertions, Tremper Longman III, "Biblical Poetry," in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 82.

⁷⁵ DeMoss defines *Isocolon* as "A sequence of two or more coordinate clauses that consist of similar constructions and a similar number of words or syllables," Matthew S. DeMoss, s.v. "Isocolon." *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001). For equality of clauses, Aristotle uses the term *parisosis*, Freese, *Aristotle: The 'Art' of Rhetoric*, 393.

⁷⁶ E.g. Rev. 4:11. For a brief discussion of its use there, see Hansen, "The Hymns of Revelation: Theological Refrains in the Apocalypse," 62.

several poetic devices this parallelism displays, indicating that John likely intended them as a mnemonic device, possibly for liturgical or doctrinal purposes.⁷⁷

Each of the lines contains a poetic prime in its original context, or, in other words, each line includes an introductory formula customary in the Apocalypse that signals that what is to follow is poetic. In the case of 1:8 and 1:17, John uses a present form of the verb λέγω, I say or speak, as part of the disclosure. 1:8 contains a present active indicative and 1:17 utilizes a present active participle. 21:6 uses the second aorist form of λέγω, εἶπον, he, she, or it said.⁷⁸ Curiously, 22:13, which contains all three lines together, does not use a typical feature of introductory formula, possibly because the individual uses of each line already possess the formula.

The introductory formula, coupled with the parallelism and *isocolon*, lead the reader to explore deeper poetic strategies as well. Alliteration is one example of this as the parrallism of the three verses repeats the sound of the omicron, ο, eight times. *Homoiooteleuta*, used rhetorically and not text critically, is another device evident in the poetry of the Apocalypse and it is present here in the endings of πρῶτος, ἔσχατος, and τέλος.⁷⁹ Both the alliteration and

⁷⁷ It is possible that these were a part of early Christian homologies. A seminal introduction to hymns and homologies in the NT is W. Hulitt Gloer, "Homologies and Hymns in the New Testament: Form, Content and Criteria for Identification," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 11, (1984).

⁷⁸ John prefers forms of λέγω for his introductory formulas in poetry. He specifically uses λέγοντες, the participle form of the verb, twenty-seven times for his poems, many of them hymns, Hansen, "The Hymns of Revelation: Theological Refrains in the Apocalypse," 61.

⁷⁹ DeMoss notes that *Homoiooteleuton* in textual criticism is the accidental scribal omission or addition of words due to similar endings in Greek manuscripts. In rhetoric, "...it involves coordinate clauses that end in similar words," Matthew S. DeMoss, s.v. "Homoiooteleuton." *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001). For its use with similar endings and not just words, as exemplified in Rev. 7:48, see Harry O. Maier, *Apocalypse Recalled: The Book of Revelation After Christendom*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 98ff; Pieter G.R. de Villiers, "The Sixth Seal in Revelation 6:12-17," *Acta Theologica* 25, no. 2 (2005): 5. For its use in Rev. 5:9, see Hansen, "The Hymns of Revelation: Theological Refrains in the Apocalypse," 62. Aristotle would call the parallel endings of these lines *paromoiosis*, when there is "...similarity of the final syllables of each clause," Freese, *Aristotle: The 'Art' of Rhetoric*, 393. It appears in the same place that Aristotle would call inflections of the same word and repetition of the same word a form of *paromoiosis* as well.

homoiooteleuta contribute to assonance.⁸⁰ All the devices, parallelism, *isocolon*, *homoiooteleuta*, and assonance, make these titles memorable forms of John's message.

However, even the additional associations of first and last, beginning and end, taken with the alpha and omega in the above parallelism, are ambiguous apart from various contexts and, as the poetic devices indicate, are likely non-literal metaphors as well. For instance, the biblical corpus asserts that God is eternal, that is, without beginning and without end.⁸¹ Unless John is breaking with the OT, which seems unlikely given his ubiquitous reliance upon it, one must understand John's metaphor as beyond any reference to literal time or any literal beginning or ending (unless, of course, it refers only to human history, which seems unlikely). Given this assertion, it is possible that these phrases become metaphorical substitutes that, ironically, given their time-bound language, assert God's eternity.⁸²

In examining this possibility, one must make careful efforts to ascertain John's potential referent for this metaphor within a cultural use of the alpha and omega,⁸³ first and last, beginning

⁸⁰ Similarity of sounds between syllables or words, Matthew S. DeMoss, s.v. "Assonance." *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

⁸¹ Psalm 93:2, Psalm 102:25-27, Isaiah 57:17.

⁸² So Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 432. Bauckham, Beckwith, Cottrell, Easley, Kistemaker, and Swete all see God's eternity here, although Swete adds infinitude as well, Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 55; Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 432; Jack Cottrell, *The Faith Once For All* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2002), 74; Easley, *Revelation*, 16; Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 87; Swete, *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, 10. The problem with seeing this as eternity is that they have asserted it without comparing the analogy more closely.

⁸³ The topic of ancient literacy is beyond the scope of this work. However, one finds it fascinating that the metaphor for God here is rooted in literacy, though it is a basic level. For more on issues and categories of literacy, see William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1989). It is also interesting that God and Jesus both self-disclose using a metaphor rooted in basic literate terms in light of recent discussions by biblical historians who assert Jesus' illiteracy, Pieter F. Craffert and Pieter J.J. Botha, "Why Jesus Could Walk on the Sea But He Could Not Read and Write: Reflections on Historicity and Interpretation in Historical Jesus," *Neotestamentica* 39, no. 1 (2005). But c.f. Craig A. Evans, "Context, Family, and Formation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*, ed. Markus Bockmuehl (Cambridge, UK; New York; Port Melbourne, AU: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Paul Foster, "Educating Jesus: The Search for a Plausible Context," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 4, no. 1 (2006); Craig A. Evans, "Jewish Scripture and the Literacy of Jesus," in *From Biblical Criticism to Biblical Faith: Essays in Honor of Lee Martin McDonald*, ed. C.A. Evans and W.H. Brackney (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007).

and end, because metaphorical meaning is inherently cultural.⁸⁴ When doing so, one discovers that in Revelation's religious milieu, at least the written influence of the OT on the Apocalypse, John may not be first referring to God's eternity, but to another OT tradition associated with first and last, beginning and end, with which alpha and omega may be connected. One argues this here because the analogy structure of the alpha omega metaphors as it relates to time seems to fail upon closer inspection.⁸⁵

For instance, one should demonstrate that alpha and omega are to the Greek alphabet as God is to *something*,⁸⁶ or a related category. This process of transference by way of analogy is like what Van der Watt describes regarding a very similar metaphor in John 10:7, "I am the door (of the sheep)." There he argues that door "is personified and some of the qualities of door are metaphorically transferred to Jesus and what Jesus does is functionally linked to door."⁸⁷ In Revelation 1:8, the speaker personifies the Greek letters alpha and omega and transfers their qualities to God and functionally linking God to alpha and omega.

With respect to the argument that 1:8 refers to God's eternity, the analogy would be that alpha and omega are the beginning and end of the alphabet, as God is the beginning and end of time. This seems like an odd analogy in that God is timeless. One could argue this about human time or one could argue that God is the beginning of creation and the end of creation, but this still requires contextual clues making this assertion necessary. The immediate co-text of Revelation 1:8 seems to lack this criterion regarding creation or time.

⁸⁴ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 12, 26-29.

⁸⁵ Newmark argues, rightly one thinks, that "...one should be able to surmise the new sense of many existing words by taking into account the force of analogy..." Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*, 179. This extends to expressions and metaphors based on comparison as well. In his description, Newmark also indicates that context, such as social and political issues, also aid in determining the force of the analogy.

⁸⁶ The italics added here are in recognition of Kittay, who argues that in the analogy of metaphor, "The metaphor was itself instrumental in having identified a *something* to be named," Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure*, 2.

⁸⁷ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 67.

Rather than simply declaring God's eternity, John is likely perpetuating previous biblical declarations of divine exclusivity that only one God exists. In conjunction with the statement, "I am the first and the last," one can here agree with Beale and others that Revelation 1:8 and the other Alpha and Omega passages in the Apocalypse rely upon intertextual references to Isaiah 44:6 for their meaning.⁸⁸ There, God declares "Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: I am the first and the last, besides me there is no god." The context continues in 44:7 asking, "Who is like me," and in 44:8 which asks, "Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one."

However, unlike Beale, the conclusion reached is not that Isaiah 44:6 supports God's sovereignty,⁸⁹ a position to which other theologians often default as well,⁹⁰ but rather that it supports God's exclusivity.⁹¹ Critically, Isaiah 44:6-8 follow Isaiah 43, a chapter devoted to God's exclusivity as well, and especially verse 10.⁹² Here God declares, "Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me."⁹³

⁸⁸ Albeit one must note that the Greek text(s) of John and that of LXX Isaiah 44:6, are not identical. Isaiah reads ἐγὼ πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ μετὰ ταῦτα whereas John writes ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, see Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996).

⁸⁹ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 199.

⁹⁰ Osborne, *Revelation*, 71. Boxall's language is strikingly similar to Osborne, although he does not use the exact term "sovereignty." Instead, he writes of "... God's role as the one from whom Creation emerges and the goal towards ἵof history." These are classic definitions of sovereignty, Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 35. Easley helpfully distinguishes the titles of God in 1:8, stating that Alpha and Omega refer to God's eternity, but that power, another way of speaking of sovereignty, comes from the title, "the Almighty," Easley, *Revelation*, 16.

⁹¹ Only in Isaiah 41:6 can one appeal to God's sovereignty in a classic sense. Isaiah 48:12, to which Beale (see above) also appeals, references God as creator, not as sovereign. Again, God may be sovereign, but in this case, it is follows from God as Creator. An example of the necessity of this distinction comes from the Babylonian pantheon where Marduk possesses sovereignty, that is, he is ruler over all the other gods. Marduk is sovereign, but he is certainly not the only Babylonian god. The God of the Hebrew Bible and Christian scriptures is exclusive and sovereign. For more on Marduk's sovereignty, see Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation*. (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 7-8.

⁹² Isaiah 45:14 also declares, "God is with you alone, and there is no other; there is no god besides him."

⁹³ The LXX uses the emphatic ἐμὲ, me, to emphasize God's exclusivity. For more on the emphatic first person personal pronoun, see Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 146.

Bringing van der Watt's analogous relationships full circle, one sees the relationship of alpha and omega to the Greek alphabet as analogous to God's relationships to other gods. Just as there are no letters before the alpha in the Greek alphabet and there are no letters after the omega, there are no gods before or after God. He is the only one.⁹⁴

Thus, the Alpha and the Omega is a metaphorical title,⁹⁵ previously unknown to John's audience,⁹⁶ which intends to proclaim primarily God's exclusivity (and potentially, his eternity) via its association with other titles in the micro context,⁹⁷ and is a part of series of synonymous and possibly synthetic parallelisms. The progression of these parallels follows.

That God is exclusive assumes that God exists or lives. This is not only reinforced in the "I am" statements of the parallels surrounding the alpha omega metaphors in Revelation, but also

⁹⁴ This is perhaps consistent with the *Shema* as well in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Here, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone." However, Reformed Christian theologians are not alone in seeing God's sovereignty here. Where it appears the context is obviously one of exclusivity, Kimelman even writes, "The organizing idea of the *Shema* ... is the realization of God's sovereignty," Reuven Kimelman, "The *Shema* and Its Rhetoric: the Case for the *Shema* Being More Than Creation, Revelation, and Redemption," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 2, no. 1 (1992): 113.

⁹⁵ It is also a euphonic title, that is, it is pleasing to the ear, and it is probably intentional that these two vowels bracket the Greek alphabet. According to Porter, euphony "in its purest form exists in only three open vowels, alpha, eta, and omega ...," Porter, "Language as a System in Ancient Rhetoric and Grammar," 20.

⁹⁶ While the metaphor is previously unknown, the reality of God's exclusivity is not. Van der Watt notes that metaphors function descriptively, stating, "It is not as if no such reality existed before and the moment the metaphor was used the reality was suddenly created. It was rather the *presence of the reality*, which gave birth to the metaphor," Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 23. Articulating this reality in a new way may be an example of what Fadaee, following Newmark, entitles a recent metaphor, a type of live metaphor, a kind of neologism that is "...fashionable in the source language community," Fadaee, "Symbols, Metaphors and Similes in Literature: A Case Study of 'Animal Farm'," 22. Fadaee here, again after Newmark, also distinguishes recent metaphor from original metaphor, both live metaphors, noting that original metaphors arise "from [a] writer or speaker's personal and creative thoughts and ideologies, so it is not fixed in the language and is more new and fresh." Since alpha and omega are inherently rooted in a source language via the alphabet, a recent rather than original metaphor fits his terminology. However, Newmark adds that while a recent metaphor is rooted in a source language, one can translate it into another language, enriching that language and thus creating an original metaphor. Thus, while the alpha and omega metaphor may be a recent metaphor for Greek, it could be an original metaphor in other languages, Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*, 112.

⁹⁷ Given John possibly uses the same title later for Jesus one assumes that these same qualities for him are in view. Osborne sees this title as a means of proclaiming "the unity of the Father and the Son," Osborne, *Revelation*, 71. Bauckham, Moore, Spence-Jones, reach a similar conclusion, Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 55; Mark E. Moore, "Images of Jesus in Revelation," in *Dragons, John, and Every Grain of Sand: Essays on the Book of Revelation in Honor of Dr. Robert Lowery*, ed. Shane J. Wood (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2011), 199; H.D.M. Spence-Jones, ed. *Revelation*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 4.

as one associates these parallels with the often overlooked passage of 1:18. Because it does not directly reference alpha and omega, but instead begins with “I am the first and the last,” it is easy to miss that the author unequivocally links first and last with the phrases, I am “the living one,” and “I am alive forever and ever.” John continues this association with first and last in 2:8, where Jesus proclaims to the angel of the church of Smyrna, “These are the words of the first and last, who was dead and came to life ...”⁹⁸

One notes the progression of the parallels here. Alpha and Omega, relating to first and last, proclaims God’s exclusivity. First and last, associated with life, asserts that God (and Jesus), is alive. One believes, again given the association with Isaiah 44, that first and last indicates that there is only one God, and this God is alive.

The idea of life may then progress to the temporal issue; how long has God been alive? The answer, forever and ever. Alpha and Omega are associated with God’s eternity, but only after this progression of ideas. Once asserted through this progression, John records the dominant idea of God’s eternity throughout Revelation again in 4:9, 4:10, 7:2, 10:6, and 15:7.

Finally, as seen in 22:13, John adds the parallel, “the beginning and the end.” This concluding statement reads fully, “I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” This last title, according to Aune, is cosmological rather than temporal and therefore the three titles could express the ontological, temporal,⁹⁹ and cosmological realities of God.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ This is a dominant characteristic of God in the OT as well, e.g. LXX Deut. 5:26, Jos. 3:10, Ps. 41:2, Isa. 37:4. Therefore, it is a common attribute in the NT, e.g. Matt. 16:16, Matt. 26:63, and Rom. 9:26.

⁹⁹ Although, again, one sees the first and the last here as reinforcing the idea of God’s exclusivity.

¹⁰⁰ Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1127. Aune thoroughly demonstrates that a tradition of using the beginning and the end predates John in Greek literature and culture. He also argues, by way of Josephus and Philo, that the tradition of the beginning and end is associated with God and creation.

If the veracities of God or attributes of God are in view here, it is possible that all three titles or metaphors refer to the same reality, that is, there is only one God and no other gods exist. Berlin believes that "...one of the main semantic functions of parallelism" is "disambiguation and ambiguity."¹⁰¹ It means that the additional line(s), particularly in two-line parallelisms, exists to "disambiguate the first, especially if the first does not make clear what the topic of conversation is."¹⁰²

Berlin strengthens this position by arguing that parallelisms can themselves be metaphorical and begins by noting, "Two contiguous lines which have the same syntactic structure tend to be viewed as having some correlation in meaning..."¹⁰³ In this way, she later writes, "Equivalence is transferred from one aspect to another and from one line to another."¹⁰⁴ One concludes then, that line one, I am the Alpha and the Omega, is alike to line two, I am the first and the last, and then held alike to line 3, I am the beginning and the end. In a metaphoric way, line 1 is line 2 is line 3.¹⁰⁵

Of note here is a possibility raised by Van der Watt's statements about metaphors and reality. They can function either descriptively or creatively.¹⁰⁶ With respect to the creative function, he asserts, "It is typical of metaphors that they describe new realities."¹⁰⁷ In certain contexts and communities, the alpha omega metaphor is probably atypical, in that many in John's audience already believed that God was the only god that existed, especially considering

¹⁰¹ Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 96.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 100.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. The example she provides from Proverbs 26:9 is an excellent model: "A thorn comes to the hand of a drunkard; And a proverb to the mouth of fools." That the thorn is a proverb is a clear metaphor, and then hand and mouth are equated (the hand is a mouth or analogically, the thorn is the hand as the proverb is to the mouth), as well as drunkards and fools. Although in the last statement, one could phrase it the drunkard is a fool and this may be the only portion taken literally. It may serve as the point of semantic transfer, since the actions of the drunkard and the words of the fool are interacting via the metaphors of the thorn is a proverb and the hand is a mouth.

¹⁰⁵ One wonders about writing it as an analogy of line 1 is to line 2 as line 2 is to line 3.

¹⁰⁶ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 23.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 151.

the intertextuality of Revelation 1 and Exodus 19, as discussed previously. This metaphor descriptively and effectively reinforces that spiritual truth for them. For this audience, the new metaphor is functioning descriptively, not creatively. That is, it can “describe a reality or issue in a fresh way that has not been done previously.”¹⁰⁸

Conversely, it is also plausible that some in John’s audience, particularly Gentile converts to Christianity from Greco-Roman religions backgrounds, had come from polytheistic backgrounds.¹⁰⁹ John’s metaphor could serve as a means of teaching them a new reality about God and his universe or reinforcing a relatively new idea for them. In this way, the alpha omega metaphor is functioning creatively.

Along the same lines, there are sections of John’s Apocalypse that appear to serve as a polemic against the Emperor cult of Rome, and John’s metaphor is a direct challenge to this. It could be that he is creatively asserting this reality not just for a Jewish-Christian or Gentile-Christian audience, but for those outside the Christian context who did not acknowledge the reality of his metaphor.

As previously outlined above, Van der Watt repeatedly reminds his readers that an author’s message has priority over any structure of images, metaphors, or other figurative language. It seems that John’s message throughout the Apocalypse is not only that God exists, but also because he exists, he is the only one worthy of worship. God rewards those who worship him and curses those who refuse to worship him. The alpha omega metaphor is a memorable metaphor that brackets the Apocalypse to drive home a central theme for John, there is only one

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 23.

¹⁰⁹ A brief introduction to the many gods of Rome and the pantheon of Greece, for instance, is in Jörg Rüpke, “Roman Religion -- Religions of Rome,” in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, ed. Jörg Rüpke, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007).

God.¹¹⁰ This central theme is also consistent with the purpose of Jewish apocalyptic as well, as noted in the apocalyptic purpose section above.

Having explored the method and assumptions of metaphor with 1:8, one now moves to Rev. 1:20, believing that these metaphors serve as test cases for one's exploration in Rev. 11:3-4.

2.2 *Revelation 1:20 – The Seven Stars are the Angels of the Seven Churches*

As above, it is already clear that Revelation 1 provides a priming effect to the nature of figurative language in Revelation. If there was any doubt to this, Revelation 1:10-16 should alleviate such doubt. In addition to potential metaphors in these verses, as one argues below, there are nine similes.¹¹¹ Before discussing these similes in detail, one includes the Greek of these verses, underlining the words *ὅμοιον*, like, and *ὥς*, as, which indicate similes.

10 ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὥς σάλπιγγος **11** λεγούσης, Ὁ βλέπεις γράψον εἰς βιβλίον καὶ πέμψον ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις, εἰς Ἐφεσον καὶ εἰς Σμύρναν καὶ εἰς Πέργαμον καὶ εἰς Θυάτειρα καὶ εἰς Σάρδεις καὶ εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν καὶ εἰς Λαοδικεῖαν.

12 Καὶ ἐπέστρεψα βλέπειν τὴν φωνὴν ἣτις ἐλάλει μετ' ἐμοῦ, καὶ ἐπιστρέψας εἶδον ἑπτὰ λυχνίας χρυσαῖς **13** καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν λυχνιῶν ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου ἐνδεδυμένον ποδήρη καὶ περιεζωσμένον πρὸς τοῖς μαστοῖς ζώνην χρυσαῖν. **14** ἡ δὲ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τρίχες λευκαὶ ὥς ἔριον λευκὸν ὥς χιῶν καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὥς φλὸξ πυρὸς **15** καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ ὥς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπυρωμένης καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ ὥς φωνὴ ὑδάτων πολλῶν, **16** καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ ἄστέρας ἑπτὰ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ῥομφαία δίστομος ὁξεία ἐκπορευομένη καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὥς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ.¹¹²

¹⁰ I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, "Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

¹² Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed

¹¹⁰ As previously recorded, Van der Watt encourages caution regarding proclaiming static images within a book such as Revelation. One notes that caution here. The brackets of 1:8 and 22:13, which both proclaim "I am the Alpha and Omega," appear also in the context of coming. 1:7 proclaims "He is coming," *ἔρχεται*, and 22:12 records, "I am coming," *ἔρχομαι*. Jesus proclaims the statement, "I am coming (*ἔρχομαι*) ..." in 16:15. However, 21:6 is in the context of completion, where the one seated on the throne proclaims, "It is done," *Γέγοναν*.

¹¹¹ See discussion of John's similes and Greek language use for similes in previous discussion above.

¹¹² The Greek is from Aland, Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini, and Metzger, eds., *The Greek New Testament*.

with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. ¹⁴ His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force.¹¹³

Each of the nine similes in these verses refer to the same figure, who is at first a disembodied voice that John hears in 1:10. Upon hearing the voice like a trumpet, φωνήν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος, which is apparently behind him, he turns to see seven golden lampstands and one like a Son of Man, ὅμοιον υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, amidst the lampstands. The one like a Son of Man has head and hair white as wool, λευκαὶ ὡς ἔριον, white as snow, λευκὸν ὡς χιῶν, with eyes like a flame of fire, οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλῶξ πυρὸς, feet like burnished bronze (to which John doubly adds, refined as in a furnace), οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπυρωμένης, and a voice like the sound of many waters, ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ ὡς φωνὴ ὑδάτων πολλῶν.

Strangely, in his description of this impressive figure, John interrupts his series of similes which characterize the figure and his voice, and he writes that this figure holds in his hand seven stars and has a sharp, two-edged sword coming out of his mouth. He then concludes his characterization with one last simile; his face was like the sun shining with full force, ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ.¹¹⁴

If these primes were not enough, John, recording the words of the one like a son of Man, also includes the word, τὸ μυστήριον, mystery, in 1:20 as a clue that he is about to reveal the true meaning of the words that are to follow. There, the figure states, “As for the mystery of the

¹¹³ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version.*

¹¹⁴ Carrell notes the absence of a body for Jesus as compared to Daniel 10:5-6. He posits that John addresses this by describing the head and hair of Jesus. He also supposes it could be for reverential reasons, or to distinguish the appearance of Jesus from the appearance of God in the Apocalypse, Peter R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*. ed. Richard Bauckham, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 153.

seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands..." and then reveals the tenor of these metaphors.

A nearly identical pattern occurs in Rev. 17:7-14. There, John explains the mystery of the woman sitting on a scarlet beast, that is, Babylon the Great, or the mother of whores as the NRSV of Rev. 17:5 reads. The angel goes on to reveal the tenor in at least one submerged metaphor. There, John saw a beast with seven heads and ten horns and the angel later declares, "The seven heads are seven mountains," and "they are seven kings." There are two submerged metaphors inextricably linked. The seven mountains are the seven heads (of the beast) and seven kings are the seven heads (of which five have fallen, one is, and one is to come).

It is not the focus of this work to discuss the meaning of Rev. 17:7ff, but it is noteworthy that the word, *μυστήριον*, "mystery," can serve as a metaphorical prime in Revelation indicating that John will unveil a vehicle occurring in a submerged metaphor.

One is not surprised, given Revelation's use of the book of Daniel,¹¹⁵ to find that it uses this pattern as well.¹¹⁶ In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and threatens to tear all the wise men of Babylon limb from limb if they cannot tell him the dream.¹¹⁷ Daniel 2:19 states that God revealed the mystery of the dream to Daniel. Daniel declares to the king that he dreamed of a statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of

¹¹⁵ See, for instance, Gregory K. Beale, "The Influence of Daniel Upon the Structure and Theology of John's Apocalypse," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27, (1984).

¹¹⁶ Daniel is the only biblical text, depending on how one defines biblical, in the OT that contains the word *μυστήριον*, a point not lost on Beale, Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 216. The word appears in Judith 2:2 and in Tobit 12:7 and 12:11, but they do not use it in the same way or with the same definition as in Daniel.

¹¹⁷ A fascinating part of the building tension in Daniel's narrative plot is that one does not know the contents of Nebuchadnezzar's dream until Daniel reveals them. In this way, even the reader has the same impression of the wise men, "The thing that the king is asking is too difficult."

iron, and its feet are partly of iron and partly of clay. Then someone cut out a stone and struck the statue on its feet, breaking into pieces the gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay.¹¹⁸

When Daniel reveals the meaning of the dream in 2:36ff, he does so by giving the tenors to a series of submerged metaphors. Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold. A second, inferior kingdom, which will arise after Nebuchadnezzar, is the chest and arms of silver. A third kingdom, which shall rule over the earth, is the middle and thighs of bronze. A fourth kingdom, which crushes and shatters as iron, is also a divided kingdom, and is brittle as clay. The stone not cut by human hands is a kingdom that will crush the other kingdoms and end them.

Again, in Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a great and strong tree in the middle of the earth, whose top reached to heaven. Its foliage was beautiful and animals sought shelter under its branches. In calling Daniel to interpret the dream, the king declares in 4:9, “No mystery is too difficult for you.”¹¹⁹ In 4:20-22, it is evident as Daniel describes the meaning of the dream, that the word mystery once again reveals a submerged metaphor. Daniel declares, in a shortened form, “The tree is you, O king!”¹²⁰

While there is much to deal with in Rev. 1:12-20, one is concerned with the metaphors of 1:20. In continuing to read beyond 1:12, it becomes clear in 1:20 that John embedded two metaphors amidst his similes. The seven lampstands and the seven stars are metaphors, not similes. In 1:20, John reveals that the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

¹¹⁸ The text says it was not human hands cutting out the stone. A similar statement is in Daniel 8:25, where God breaks the little horn of the male goat, a metaphor for a king. The text says this happens not with human hands.

¹¹⁹ Rahlfs's LXX indicates that his Old Greek text of Daniel does not have a 4:9. There is a lacuna in 4:6-9. However, the Theodotion text contains the discussion here, Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*.

¹²⁰ Although Daniel 4 is the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel's statement “the tree is you...” sounds like Nathan's parable of rich man who stole the lamb of a poor man, when he declares to David in 2 Samuel 12:7, “You are the man!”

These two metaphors are a part of a larger, composite metaphor, and the reader would do well to take them together in establishing meaning.¹²¹ However, one will examine these metaphors individually, in the order in which they appear in 1:20, for analyzing structure and the cultural preconditions needed in understanding each. The first metaphor, then, is the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

At first glance, 1:20 is an explicit surface metaphor, much the same as 1:8. Although the ancients lacked the precise scientific knowledge of the size and composition of astral bodies, such as stars, there is no reason to believe that John's image relays anything but the incongruence necessary for a metaphor to occur.¹²² An animate being, such as one like a son of man, is unlikely to hold seven literal stars in their hand, not just because of their size, but also because of their distance and inaccessibility. Moreover, one does not typically equate or understand inanimate stars with animate angels.

Therefore, one is inclined to regard the metaphor as "the angels are the stars," leaving the number seven and the genitive descriptor for later discussion. In this way, "angels" acts as the tenor, "stars" acts as the vehicle, and the incongruity between the two is easy to demonstrate.

Upon closer examination, this metaphor is more complex than the explicit surface metaphor of 1:8. Most notably, in 1:20, the expressed syntax of the metaphor appears in reverse,

¹²¹ See Van der Watt's definition of composite metaphors earlier in this dissertation.

¹²² Söding discusses examples of those who wrongly conflate John's metaphors with astral bodies, i.e. those who attempt to translate *ἀρνίον*, lamb, in Rev. 5:6, as Aries, the constellation or sign of the star. He writes, "Das griechische Wort *arníon* wird von einigen mit „Widder“ wiedergegeben, weil sie die Macht des Lammes betont sehen. Tatsächlich spielt das Sternzeichen des Widders eine Rolle im religionsgeschichtlichen Umfeld, weil der Widder, das Sternzeichen des Frühjahrsäquinoktiums, bei den Griechen für den Kriegsgott Ares steht und ein Jahr, das im „Haus“ des Widders beginnt, im Frühjudentum als ein Jahr apokalyptischer Katastrophen erwartet wird ... Aber „Widder“ entspricht weder der lexikalischen Bedeutung noch dem starken Bild-Kontrast. „Lamm“ ist die korrekte Übersetzung," Thomas Söding, "Das Buch Mit Sieben Siegeln," in *Neutestamentliche Vorlesung im Sommersemester 2015*, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät (Bochum, Germany: Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 2015), 40.

with the tenor, the angels, appearing after the vehicle, the stars. The construction is vehicle + tenor, compared to tenor + vehicle in 1:8.

As one previously notes, metaphors are generally irreversible and follow the principle of *unidirectionality*. Either this is not the case with John in 1:20, or one must consider this metaphor on its face, and argue that stars are in fact the tenor and angels are the vehicle. If this is so, then the simple metaphor reads the stars are the angels, and not, the angels are the stars, which changes the equation dramatically.

John adds to the complexity by including the genitive descriptor, of the seven churches, with the tenor, the angels. He further adds two descriptors, by way of the indeclinable ordinal number seven, one with the subject and the other with the genitive descriptor. As with the image of a human or living being holding seven stars in their hand, the semantics of the metaphor reveals incongruence.

The complexity and issues of tenor and vehicle can be resolved if one understands 1:20 as not only a composite metaphor, or a surface metaphor, but as a submerged metaphor. As one notes above, a submerged metaphor occurs when an author or speaker presents the vehicle first, earlier in a literary context, and the tenor then appears later.¹²³ This is the situation with 1:20. One should not understand in any way that John has reversed the metaphor. Instead, John is merely giving the tenor later. In this way, 1:20 does not reveal the exact structure of the metaphor, but instead reveals the intended tenor. Because of this, although the text of 1:20 reads differently, it is entirely acceptable for one to read the metaphor as, the angels are the seven stars.

To understand this metaphor, one needs to explore several steps. It is imperative to attempt at least a brief examination of how the biblical and extra-biblical material, such as the

¹²³ By way of reminder, see Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 20-21.

apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, present angels and stars. Some discussion of these in the Greco-Roman world as well as possibly the ANE will help. Finally, one will need to consider the focus and frame of 1:13-16 since this is the beginning co-text for the submerged metaphor.

Before moving forward with these considerations, one gives an overview of interpretations of this submerged metaphor as means of offering background and a place from which to begin.

2.2.1 Overview of Interpretations for The Angels of the Seven Churches are the Seven Stars

While one calls “the angels of the seven churches are the seven stars” a submerged metaphor, Smalley writes that 1:9-20 contains a “cluster of symbols,” and includes the stars among these symbols.¹²⁴ In this way, although one sees stars as the vehicle to the metaphor, Smalley would say the stars stand for something beyond themselves, becoming a symbol.¹²⁵

However, if one takes the definition of symbol as given above, particularly those of Abrams and Fadaee, then stars cannot be a symbol because a symbol is not a comparison or a vehicle in a metaphor.¹²⁶ In 1:20, stars is both a comparison and a vehicle, necessitating a rejection of stars as symbols. For the stars to be symbolic, one would have to argue that stars stand for something else as culturally defined, but not in a metaphorical way. Given the above definitions, stars are a submerged metaphor because the tenor is absent in the immediate co-text and John reveals the tenor later.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*, 47.

¹²⁵ Hemer also uses the terminology of symbolism in his section entitled “The Problem of the Angels.” He attempts an overview of meanings, which are all unconvincing, and seems to indicate that he prefers that the angels are “personifications of the churches themselves,” because literal angels “cannot be held guilty of the faults of their churches,” Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 33.

¹²⁶ Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* s.v. “Symbol.” Seventh ed., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999); Fadaee, “Symbols, Metaphors and Similes in Literature: A Case Study of ‘Animal Farm,’” 20-21.

¹²⁷ Van der Watt cites David Miller as noting a submerged metaphor never reveals the tenor, but the context helps to identify the “relevant tenor,” Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to*

It would appear, even though Smalley does not define what he means by symbol, that he shares a view of symbol with Coloe, as above, who believes a symbol is the same as the vehicle of a metaphor.¹²⁸ Since one uses Abrams and Fadaee's definition, which Van der Watt also uses, and since one now recognizes John's prevalent use of a metaphor in syntactical constructions like the one in which stars appear, one does not believe the stars are a symbol.

Smalley continues and attempts to define what it is that the stars represent. He conflates stars and angels together writing, "...the stars, held by the heavenly Jesus, are the 'angelic' leaders of the seven local churches."¹²⁹ What Smalley may really mean here is that the angels are symbols since he sees them not as angels, but as leaders of the church.¹³⁰

What he fails to recognize is that his definition really focuses upon metaphor, and specifically that in the way he articulates himself, the word "angels" is at the same time both a tenor in one metaphor, and a vehicle in another. It is the tenor in the angels of the seven churches are the stars, and a vehicle in "church leaders are the angels of the seven churches." If taken as a complex, submerged metaphor, this combination would read, "The church leaders are the angels of the seven churches who are the seven stars."

Although Abrams does not address explicitly whether a symbol could exist as the tenor in a metaphor,¹³¹ the longer, more complex metaphor articulated here would mean he is still correct, because angels would possess two functions, one of which is still as a vehicle.

John, 20; Miller, *The Net of Hephaestus: A Study of Modern Criticism and Metaphysical Metaphor*, 128-134. This is not how one uses the definition of a submerged metaphor here.

¹²⁸ Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 6.

¹²⁹ Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*, 47.

¹³⁰ Caird, appealing to traditional ideas among the Jews of John's day, writes, "The angels are not to be identified with bishops or pastors," Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 24. Boxall eschews this idea as well, proposing the angels are "surely not merely human leaders, whether monarchical bishops or prophets," Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 44.

¹³¹ Except to indicate that simile and metaphor have a "paired subject," lacking in symbol, Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* s.v. "Symbol." Seventh ed., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999).

Easley has a similar interpretation to Smalley, seeing the angels as “human messengers” whom he identifies as “almost certainly ... the pastors of the churches.”¹³² Only later in his comments does he reveal the vocabulary of symbol proposing, “Both the churches and their spiritual leaders are symbolized as light-bearing bodies.”¹³³

Caird, similarly, sees the stars as symbolizing the angels, but “are no doubt also the seven planets, pictured as a necklace of glittering jewels hanging from the hand of the Son of Man.”¹³⁴ While Caird’s assertion fails on the same grounds of symbolic definition as Smalley, his efforts at representing the stars as the seven planets is a familiar assertion amongst ancient commentators.¹³⁵

Boxall, calling this section imagery, believes the angels of the seven churches are the seven stars “evokes the Israelite belief that each nation or people had its corresponding heavenly guardian.”¹³⁶ He goes so far as to charge that the angels must ultimately answer for “the failures of their earthly charges.”¹³⁷

Beale summarizes four of the prevailing beliefs concerning the identity of the angels: (1) heavenly beings (2) heavenly beings who are representatives of or guardians over the churches so that the churches are also in mind (3) human leaders or representatives of the churches, (4) or personifications of the prevailing spirit or character of the churches.¹³⁸

¹³² Easley, *Revelation*, 19. In the same place, Easley does confess that regardless of whether the angels are real angels, or “guardian angels,” or pastors, the point of John’s imagery is that “Jesus sovereignly held these persons in his protection and care.” However, unless he views angels as persons, even in this last conclusive point he does not look past his interpretation of angels as pastors.

¹³³ Ibid., 21.

¹³⁴ Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 25.

¹³⁵ Baumgarten traces Second Temple associations of the seven lights of the lampstand with the seven planets, including Philo and Josephus who attest to the same, Joseph M. Baumgarten, “Immunity to Impurity and the Menorah,” *JSIJ* 5, (2006).

¹³⁶ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 44.

¹³⁷ Ibid. While Boxall’s theory may be correct, the text does not explicitly suggest this possibility and he provides no evidence for why he believes this to be so.

¹³⁸ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 217.

What many commentators on Revelation fail to do is separate what is symbolic and what is metaphoric. The number seven is what causes Caird and others to associate the stars with the planets as in his comments on the “seven” planets. One could argue that apart from the number, there is little within the literature drawing together stars and planets at a metaphorical or symbolic level.

In general, while stars and planets may be associated, they are typically not equal. In Caird’s association, one would have to think of them metaphorically, as the stars are the planets, something which appears as highly unlikely. Therefore, it is the number seven that causes confusion when interpreting Revelation’s metaphors, not the other elements of the comparison.

In addition, as noted elsewhere in the section regarding the association of seven lamps with the lampstand, this association of seven there significantly predates any late developing correlations of the number seven with the planets. This would be a much later innovation in understanding possible meanings for seven.

The number seven creates confusion in Rev. 1:12-20 because it is the symbol in the “the angels are the stars” metaphor. The number seven does not serve as the tenor or vehicle nor does it really alter the comparison. Therefore, it fits well in Van der Watt’s scheme of symbol and that of Abrams as well as Fadaee.

The problem of meaning in these verses does not lie with the transaction, or interaction, of the constituent parts of the metaphors. Rather it appears commentators struggle to integrate the symbolic valence of the number seven with the metaphor. Accordingly, commentators must separate out the constituent parts of the metaphor first, and then identify the symbol, as one attempts using a dynamics of metaphor strategy.

One commentator who does identify the number seven as symbolic is Robert Mounce, although he too struggles to determine why the number seven appears. His important work recognizes that the number seven relates to the churches because of their sequential appearance along the postal route of Asia Minor. Nevertheless, about this number seven, he also concedes, “It is at the same time, however, a decidedly symbolic number...”¹³⁹

Without providing much by way of argument, he concludes that the number stands for completeness, and argues against those who see it as standing for seven consecutive periods of church history. Because it stands for completeness, he resolves that the seven churches represent the church universal.¹⁴⁰

Regardless of what the number seven may mean or stand for, one must recognize that its chief function, grammatically, is to limit or modify the words churches and angels. Why the number seven, as opposed to three, four, ten, or twelve, other important numbers in Revelation, is a matter of exploration below.

2.2.2 *Overview of angels*

Now that one has surveyed general interpretations of this metaphor, the angels of the seven churches are the seven stars, it is important to clarify what this metaphor means by examining the constituent parts.¹⁴¹ Only then can one ascertain the dynamics of this metaphor and its probable meaning.

¹³⁹ Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 77. One wonders about the possibility of seeing the seven churches as referring to the church universal while at the same time rejecting the notion that the number seven stands for completeness. Separating the two ideas is possible. Furthermore, it is interesting that the while commentators seem content to use the number seven in this way, they do not consistently apply it throughout the Apocalypse. E.g. the seven trumpets represent all trumpets or “trumpets universal” or the seven bowls represent all bowls, etc.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Miller, writing about poems, is correct in asserting that “they contain no ‘miracle of life’ which escapes irretrievably when the poem is ‘dismembered,’” Miller, *The Net of Hephaestus: A Study of Modern Criticism and Metaphysical Metaphor*, 123. The same is true for metaphors. Analytical criticism of metaphor can destroy its poetic meaning for some people, but not necessarily.

Since one has already identified these constituent parts, it is possible to proceed with a brief biblical overview of angels¹⁴² to identify potential associated commonplaces with stars, and in turn, possibly meanings for the metaphor.¹⁴³

The Hebrew word, מַלְאָךְ, angel or messenger,¹⁴⁴ LXX's ἄγγελος, is the most common word for angel in the OT and first appears in Genesis 16:7, where the angel of the Lord appears to Hagar after she ran away from Sarai.¹⁴⁵ The angel has no physical description in these verses, but three times the Hebrew text uses the Qal imperfect, third person, masculine, singular form of, וַיֹּאמֶר, *wayyōmer*, and he said. The text portrays the angel as masculine and that he speaks.¹⁴⁶

This story, and the others in Genesis, set the stage for the rest of the OT regarding angels.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² One is not able to comment exhaustively on the hundreds of passages in which angels appear. However, one will cover enough passages to demonstrate common patterns in the biblical text.

¹⁴³ Irvin's assertion that angels derive from Canaanite deities that the Hebrews then turn into God's messengers is unconvincing, Dorothy Irvin, *Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*. ed. Kurt Bergerhof, Manfred Dietrich, and Oswald Loretz, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament: Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer; Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 101-102. Among other reasons, it requires an evolutionary view of Israelite religion in that it developed from the polytheism of its neighbors. Such an *a priori* assumption is not universal. Jones succinctly demonstrates that angels derive from Judaism, Christianity, and later appear in Islamic material, David Albert Jones, *Angels: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), xv-xvi.

¹⁴⁴ Heidt notes there are other words for angel in the Old Testament, such as cherub, mediator, ministers, servants, watcher, host, envoy, holy one, and seraph. These are in addition to angels with names, such as Michael and Gabriel, William George Heidt, *Angelology of the Old Testament*. The Catholic University of America Studies in Sacred Theology Second Series (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), 1-18. Collins argues that in the vast majority of Hebrew and Aramaic textual traditions, holy ones are angels, John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Second ed. (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 137. An example of the holy ones is LXX Deut. 33:2, where the word for holy ones, *καδης*, is quite different from the holy ones of the book of Revelation where John uses *ἁγίων* as in Rev. 5:8. John does not use holy ones to refer to angels but rather to saints, or those that follow Christ.

¹⁴⁵ Irvin, continuing in the tradition of Gunkel, classifies this story, as well as those in Gen. 18-19, 21, 22, and 28, as folktales, Irvin, *Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*, XIII-XV.

¹⁴⁶ Jones includes a brief introduction to angels as men in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and the shift to a more feminine or androgynous portrayal in Renaissance art, Jones, *Angels: A Very Short Introduction*, 30-31. Gen. 16 is a part of four ANE folktale motifs according to Irvin. The strife between wives, the prediction of the child's fate before his birth, the naming of a child (when related to the plot), and the explanation of the origin of a well or spring, or of its name, Irvin, *Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*, 5-8.

¹⁴⁷ Hundley notes that while many scholars argue that the angel of the Lord that appears here in Genesis is different from other angels, this distinction does not seem to hold up in Genesis and Exodus, Michael B. Hundley, "Of God

Genesis 19:1, where two angels appear to Lot in Sodom, continues the motif of using masculine terms for the angels and this is clearer in 19:5 when the men of Sodom demand that the “men” that came to Lot come outside in order that they might have carnal knowledge of them.¹⁴⁸ This passage also continues in a similar characterization in that the angels speak as in Gen. 19:2.

The text further portrays them as human in ascribing to them hands and feet. Lot desires to wash their feet in a sign of hospitality in 19:2 and the men use their hands to pull Lot inside and away from the Sodomites in 19:10.¹⁴⁹ 19:11 ascribes to the angels the power to strike men with blindness.

Gen. 19:12-26 portrays the angels as bringing a message of judgment from the Lord against Sodom and Gomorrah. The angels warn Lot and his family to flee and then forcibly remove them from the city of Sodom as in 19:16. The angels leave the family outside the city.

The urgency of the passage relates to the angels as agents of destruction. Gen. 19:13 records the angels saying, “For we are about to destroy this place...” In 19:22 one of the angels indicates that he will wait until Lot reaches the little city of Zoar before the destruction begins, announcing, “...I can do nothing until you arrive there.” When 19:24 states the Lord rained down fire and sulfur upon Sodom and Gomorrah and all the plain, it seems reasonable to assume this was the work of the angels on the Lord’s behalf.

and Angels: Divine Messengers in Genesis and Exodus in Their Ancient Near Eastern Contexts," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 67, no. 1 (April 2016): 2.

¹⁴⁸ One uses the term “motif” after the specific definition of Irvin, who argues that theme is too broad because other forms of literature can possess themes, whereas motif is particular to narrative and plots, Irvin, *Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*, 4. She defines motif as “a plot element which moves the story forward a step,” *ibid.*, 2. Additionally, Irvin’s assessment that the sin of Sodom is inhospitality is anachronistic and inconsistent with the text, as well as the Torah, *ibid.*, 22.

¹⁴⁹ Irvin has a brief, yet valuable commentary on the portrayal of angels as men in Genesis 19, noting that it is a problem of European languages, not one of Hebrew, where angels and men are synonymous, particularly given that messengers were usually men, *ibid.*, 21.

Hagar again is a main character in the early stories of angels in Genesis 21, when Abraham sends her away from him with her son Ishmael. Gen. 21:17 writes that the angel of the Lord called to Hagar from heaven and spoke to her. Here, it is clear the angel is in heaven and that he speaks. Combined with the previous portrayals of angels on the earth, bringing messages and destruction from the Lord, this passage in Gen. 21 indicates that angels are both heavenly and earthly, perhaps that they originate in heaven and bring God's messages to earth.¹⁵⁰

Genesis 22:11 and 22:15, during the Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac narrative, report that the angel of the Lord calls to Abraham from heaven twice. The words regarding the angel calling and the angel speaking are again masculine. The text indicates the angel is heavenly and it indicates the angel speaks, apparently in a language Abraham understands.¹⁵¹

When Abraham charges the eldest servant of his house to return to Abraham's homeland and family to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham, in Gen. 24:7, promises the servant that the angel of the Lord will go before him and that the servant will find a wife. What this means is unclear. It could mean the angel will offer protection to the servant, but the co-text seems to point to something more. Upon seeing Rebekah later in the chapter in 24:21, the servant sits silently to discern whether the Lord has made his journey successful.

It seems likely that at least a part of this discernment process relates to the journey of finding Abraham's family. The servant inquires after Rebekah's family and after learning she is a daughter of Nahor, according to Gen. 24:26-27, he bows down and worships the Lord because "...the Lord has led me on the way to the house of my master's kin."

Later, in 24:40, when the servant recounts his errand to Laban, Rebekah's brother, the word "way" again appears as associated with the role of the angel in making the servant's "way"

¹⁵⁰ The basic function of an angel is that of messenger, so Jones, *Angels: A Very Short Introduction*, 47-54.

¹⁵¹ Judg. 2:1-5, 5:23, 6:12, 6:20, 13:3, all record the angel of the Lord speaking to the people of Israel.

successful.¹⁵² The word for “way”, דֶּרֶךְ, generally indicates a road or journey, but may also be a figure of speech used for behavior.¹⁵³ In this case, the angel is a guide and Exodus 23:20 articulates this same role for the angel, who goes before Israel into Canaan, “to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared.”¹⁵⁴

Besides Abraham, no one in Genesis has more contact with angels than Jacob. The ultimate narrative concerning angels in Genesis is 28:12 where Jacob dreams of a ladder, “set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven.”¹⁵⁵ The angels of God are ascending and descending upon it, indicating their transience between heaven and earth. Jacob names the place Bethel, or house of God, in 28:19, but also calls it the gate of heaven in 28:17. He also meets angels in Gen. 32:1-2 and names that place Mahanaim, the camp of God.

The angel of the Lord leads the people out of Egypt and into the wilderness in Exodus, but makes little appearance in the remainder of the Pentateuch.¹⁵⁶ There are few appearances in Numbers and none in Deuteronomy.

In the Judges, angels or the angel of the Lord continue the motif of speaking. Judges describes the physical appearance of angels or the angel of the Lord where none before have

¹⁵² The LXX uses *εὐδόω*, from *εὐδοῶ*, which NRSV translates, “make your way successful,” in Gen. 24:27. BDAG indicates the term is similar to *ὁδός*, the word for road or journey, but helps reflect the nuance of path or behavior, and not just a literal road, William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, Third ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 410. Gen. 24:40 combines both words.

¹⁵³ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, eds., *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 202-204. 1 Kgs. 2:4 is an example of the word used for behavior, where the Lord tells David that if his sons are careful of their way, to walk before the Lord in truth with all their heart, then David will never fail to have a son on the throne of Israel.

¹⁵⁴ Exod. 23:23, 32:34, and 33:2 all portray the angel as one who goes before Israel on the way. The angel who brings Israel out of Egypt and guards their way, appears also in Num. 20:16 and Judg. 2:1. However, the angel of the Lord can also obstruct one’s way as in Num. 22:22-35, where the angel stands in the way of Balaam as an adversary.

¹⁵⁵ The text quoted is, unless noted, always from the *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. The angel speaks to Jacob in another dream in Gen. 31:11-13, telling him to leave the land he was in and return to the land of his birth.

¹⁵⁶ Exod. 14:19, 23:20, 23:23, 32:34, and 33:2.

done so. Other than simply appearing as a man, the angel of the Lord is apparently awe-inspiring, as Manoah's wife attests in Judg. 13:6.¹⁵⁷ The OT links angels with fire and here in Judg. 13:20, the angel ascends to heaven in the flame of Manoah's sacrifice. In Exod. 3:2, the angel of the Lord famously appears to Moses in the flame of the burning bush.¹⁵⁸

The angel of the Lord appears little in the monarchial period, as 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, and 1-2 Chronicles record. 2 Sam. 19:28 reports that Mephibosheth, King Saul's grandson, views King David like the angel of the Lord. In the only other appearance of an angel in the Samuel corpus, 2 Sam. 24:16 records that an angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem because David had taken a census of the people. The Lord relents of his anger and the angel does not destroy the city.¹⁵⁹

In a strange story in 1 Kgs. 13:18, a deceiving prophet claims to speak by the angel of the Lord, and in 1 Kgs. 19:5-7, an angel provides food for Elijah for his journey. 2 Kgs. 1:3 writes of an angel speaking to Elijah telling him to go and confront Ahaziah, and the same angel speaks to him again in 2 Kgs. 1:15, telling him to go to Ahaziah.

¹⁵⁷ She also calls the angel a man of God and tells her husband that the angel refuses to give his name. Manoah, the woman's husband, also asks the angel his name but the angel tells him, "It is too wonderful," in Judg. 13:18.

¹⁵⁸ Psalm 104:4 may reference this as well as. It reads, "...you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers." Some believe the messengers and servants here refer to angels, due to the LXX translation of "...the one who makes his angels winds and his servants a flaming fire," Walter D. Zorn, *Psalms*. ed. Terry Briley and Paul Kissling, 2 vols., The College Press NIV Commentary, vol. 2 (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999), 267. The writer of Hebrews in the NT quotes this Psalm in Heb. 1:7 and associates it clearly with angels. Allen notes the possible tripartite structure of Psalm 104 as its strophes speak of God's creation of heaven, earth, and sea, Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*. ed. John D. W. Watts, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 43. The angels then, can perhaps transit all three.

¹⁵⁹ The plague of the death of the firstborn in Egypt does not use the word angel, but in Exod. 12:23 Moses speaks of the destroyer, הַמַּשְׁחִית, saying the Lord will not allow *hāmāšḥîṭ*, to enter the houses of Israel to strike them down. The same root word for destroy is here in 2 Sam. 24:16, שָׁחַת. 1 Chr. 21:12-15, recording the same story as 2 Sam. 24, uses the word destroyer for the angel. Although 2 Kgs. 19:35 does not use the word destroy, the angel there strikes down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. 2 Chr. 32:21 has the same story as 2 Kgs. 19:35, but records the angel cut off the warriors. Psalm 78:49 NRSV, in writing of God's wrath against Egypt during the plagues, records that God let loose a band of destroying angels against them, although the Hebrew uses a different word, distressing, rather than destroying. The context of Egypt is the same.

1 Chr. 21:16 has David seeing an angel standing between heaven and earth, with a sword drawn.¹⁶⁰ Continuing in 21:18-27, the Lord commands the same angel to speak to Gad, giving him a message for David. David was to build an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and only after David complies with this command and offers a burnt offering, does the Lord command the angel to put his sword in his sheath.¹⁶¹

If the angel or angels appear very little in the monarchy, they appear less in the prophets, except for Zechariah. The prophet Isaiah writes of the angel of the Lord in 37:36, recounting the story of 2 Kgs. 19:35-37, where the angel strikes down the 185,000 Assyrians. Hosea 12:5 recounts the story of Jacob wrestling with an angel in Gen. 32:24-32, although the Genesis account only says Jacob wrestled with a man. Zechariah has the angel of the Lord interpreting visions for Zechariah in each of the first six chapters and this accounts for the overwhelming appearance of angels in the prophets.

In the wisdom literature, Job 33:23 is alone in calling an angel a mediator between God and man, in the sense of one who pleads for God to declare a man righteous due to repentance.¹⁶²

The NT continues the motif and theme of the angel as messenger who speaks to people on behalf of God, but also continues other angelic themes and motifs as well. This is certainly true of the Book of Revelation as it contains more references to angels than any book in the NT.¹⁶³ A survey of NT uses below, as well as uses in Revelation, reveals that each discussion of

¹⁶⁰ That the angel has a sword is like the angel in Num. 22 who confronts Balaam. Gen. 3:24 writes of cherubim, not “angels”, and a flaming sword, which turns to guard the tree of life.

¹⁶¹ The narrative continues by stating that David would not inquire of the Lord at Moses’ tabernacle and Moses’ altar, which were at Gibeon, because David was afraid of the angel’s sword, 1 Chr. 21:29-30.

¹⁶² Alden ties this passage to Job 16:19, which says, “...even now my witness is in heaven...” He goes on to argue that one should best understand the angel in Job 33:23 as a “kinsman redeemer,” who stands “...by the plaintiff’s side,” Robert L. Alden, *Job*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 329.

¹⁶³ UBS 5 lists 175 instances of ἄγγελος in the NT, 67 of which are in The Apocalypse, approximately 38% of all NT uses. The next closest is the Gospel of Luke at 25 uses, then Acts with 21 instances and Matthew with 20.

angel(s) is context dependent. One will seek to determine which contexts are most important for determining potential associated commonplaces with stars.

Matthew's early uses are consistent with Jacob's experience in Genesis in that angels appear with special messages in dreams. Three times an angel appears to Joseph in a dream, giving instructions on his actions. In the first instance, the angel commands him to take Mary as his wife, and later instructs him when to flee to Egypt from Judah and then when to return from Egypt.¹⁶⁴

Matthew's mid to late textual references begin to use angels metaphorically, primarily in the submerged metaphors of parables, and presents them in a motif previously unattested in the OT. In what the NRSV calls the parable of the weeds among the wheat in Matthew 13:24ff, a farmer sows good seed in his field, but an enemy sows weeds in the field while everyone was sleeping. The workers wish to pull up the weeds but the master tells them to wait until harvest, so that they do not pull up any wheat in the process. At harvest, the reapers will first collect the weeds, bind them into bundles for burning, and then gather the wheat into the barn. It is only later, in Matt. 13:39, that Jesus declares the angels are the reapers.

This appears to be the first use of angels in a metaphor in the biblical corpus and the OT does not attest to the vehicle of reapers. Although the parable of the net beginning in Matt. 13:47 does not specifically use the word fishermen, it does compare angels to the fishermen who throw a net into the sea and catch fish. At the end of the age in Matt. 13:49, the angels, as fishermen, will separate the good fish from the bad fish, or the evil from the righteous. The role of the

Granted, not all uses of the word refer to angels, e.g. Matthew 11:10, which refers to John the Baptist as a messenger.

¹⁶⁴ Matthew 1:20, 2:13, and 2:19. Matthew's portrait of angels in the birth narratives of Jesus is in stark contrast to Luke's where the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and a company of angels appears to the shepherds, but Luke says nothing about angels and Joseph.

angels in Matthew's narrative, in separating the wicked from the righteous at the end of the age, is a new motif in considering the background to angels.

Matthew 16:27, writing of the second coming of Jesus, or the Son of Man in Jesus' own words, indicates that the Son of Man will come "with his angels." It is the first portrayal of angels belonging to someone other than "the Lord," a common OT usage. However, like earlier end of the age motifs in Matthew, the angels will participate in what appears to be a judgment scene, where the Son of Man will "repay everyone for what has been done."

Matthew 18:10 is by all accounts a difficult passage to interpret. There Jesus is teaching a series of lessons to the disciples in response to their question in 18:1 of, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Jesus calls a child into their midst and answers "...unless you change and become like children, you will never the kingdom of heaven." Jesus continues saying, "Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

It appears in the verses following these declarations, that Jesus is not overly concerned with how one becomes humble like a child, but rather the focus on the teachings is on how one should welcome such a humble person, in keeping with Jesus' last declaration. In Matthew 18:6 and 18:10, Jesus calls such humble people "little ones."¹⁶⁵ Then, in Matthew 18:10, Jesus warns his disciples against despising any such little ones, giving the reason, "...for I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven."

¹⁶⁵ Matthew records Jesus as using the term, τῶν μικρῶν, from μικρός, *mikros*, for small. Matthew's narrative portrays Jesus as having already answered the question of the disciples back in Matthew 11:11. There, Jesus declares concerning John the Baptist, "...among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The word in the Greek text for least is μικρότερος, and adjectival form of *mikros*. Matthew creates a play on words between the two passages.

The meaning of humble disciples having their own angels in heaven who see the face of God is not easy to determine.¹⁶⁶ However, the angels are clearly in heaven, which is God's domain, and they see God's face.¹⁶⁷ Matthew 22:20 also states that the angels are in heaven, but adds Jesus saying that, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage," which is how it will be at the resurrection.¹⁶⁸

Matt. 24:31 is yet another of Matthew's end of time passages regarding angels, where Jesus will send them with a loud trumpet call and they will gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. In answering potential questions about when he will send these angels, Jesus says in Matt. 24:36, that no one knows the day or the hour, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the father. The angels here are again playing the role of reapers, they are heavenly, and they are finite in their knowledge.

¹⁶⁶ Hagner points out that not all angels could look upon the face of God, an extrapolation of Isa. 6:2, and that they can do what no human can do, which is see the face of God (Exodus 33:20), Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 526. Furthermore, Hagner believes that these angels do not represent guardian angels, but rather emphasize the importance of the disciples, that they have angels who may intercede before God, *ibid.*, 527.

¹⁶⁷ Morris came to the same two-fold conclusion in his summary as well, Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; InterVarsity Press, 1992), 464. Marshall sees a connection with 1Q28B, where "angels of the face" appear, but this is difficult to interpret, I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 741; *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. 2 vols., vol. 1 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997), 107; *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Luke 20:36 adds to Matthew's statement with, "Indeed they cannot die anymore," referring to the wife and her seven husbands about which the Pharisees had asked Jesus. They cannot die anymore "because they are like angels and are children of God..." Luke uses the NT *hapax legomenon* ἰσάγγελοι, which the NRSV translates "like angels." Marshall argues from the co-text that the focus here is really upon marriage and the procreation of children. At the resurrection, the parentage of God transcends the obsolete human parentage and need for procreation, Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 741. On the *hapax legomenon*, BDAG indicates Philo as a potential comparison for meaning of the word ἰσάγγελοι as "equal to angels," Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 480. Philo uses ἴσος ἀγγέλως γεγονώς, becoming equal to angels, with reference to Abraham, and it is not difficult to see that Luke's word may be a permutation, Philo, "Sacrifices §5," in *The Works of Philo: Greek Text with Morphology*, ed. Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth, and Roald Skarsten (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005). Philo also says the angels are bodiless and happy souls. For an overview of interpretations of this passage, regarding resurrection, marriage, levirate marriage, and angels, see Bernard P. Robinson, "They Are As Angels in Heaven: Jesus' Alleged Reposte to the Sadducees," *New Blackfriars* 78, no. 922 (1997).

Matt 25:31-41 presents a dichotomy of angels, indicating that the Son of Man will return to earth one day in glory, and the angels with him, in v. 31. Later, in v. 41, in a foreshadowing of the judgment, Jesus tells the wicked on his left to “depart me,” and go into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. It is the first biblical portrayal of the devil having angels, and may show some distinction concerning the judgment. In earlier Matthew texts, the angels, who are metaphorical reapers, collect the wicked, who are presumably human. Here, Jesus is the one who executes judgment against the devil and his angels, and the other angels, the reapers, appear to have no role in collecting or judging the other angels. However, this is only speculation.

At the resurrection of Jesus in Matt. 28:2, the angel of the Lord from heaven is the one who rolled back the stone of Jesus’ tomb and in 28:5, speaks to the women.¹⁶⁹ These two references end Matthew’s portrayal of angels as heavenly messengers, but also as agents of judgment at the end of the age. The angelic appearance to the women also recalls the angelic appearance to Hagar in Genesis and to Manoah’s wife in the book of Judges. Angels appear to both men and women with messages from God.

Mark’s few references to angels follow Matthew’s depiction above.¹⁷⁰ They are heavenly, will come with the Son of Man in glory at the end of the age, they do not marry or give in marriage, they will collect God’s elect at the judgment, and they do not when that judgment, or the end of time will occur.

Luke stands alone as the biblical author who records the most angelic appearances in the birth narratives of Jesus, which include those of John the Baptist. An angel appears to Zechariah,

¹⁶⁹ One wonders if there is some narrative motif regarding the opening of entrances. Here the angel opens the tomb, in Acts 5:19 the angel of the Lord opens the doors of the prison containing the apostles, and in Acts 12:7-10, an angel delivers Peter from prison, opening the iron gate leading into the city (Jerusalem), allowing Peter entrance.

¹⁷⁰ Mark 1:13, 8:38, 12:25, 13:27, and 13:32.

standing at the right of the altar, announcing to Zechariah that his previously barren wife would have a son. The later scenes of the Zechariah narrative reveal the angel is Gabriel, that he stands in the presence of God, and that he speaks (1:19-23).

Similarly, the angel Gabriel appears to Mary in Luke 1:30 where he again speaks and announces the birth of a child, a common motif for angels in biblical narrative. In Luke 2:9ff, the angel of the Lord appears to shepherds in the field, announcing the birth of Jesus. A multitude of heavenly angels appears with him and they are praising God. Luke 9:26 follows Matthew and Mark in indicating the Son of Man will come with his angels in glory, but in this instance, they are holy angels.

Luke 12:8, 9, and 15:10 all describe the angels as “of God.” Luke 16:22 has the unique story of angels carrying the dead, poor man Lazarus to be with Abraham. Luke 22:43-44, represents a textual variant, which is a likely addition.¹⁷¹ During the arrest and betrayal of Jesus narratives, it records an angel appeared to Jesus while he prayed on the Mount of Olives and gave Jesus strength. Luke 24:23 simply records that the women who went to the tomb to find Jesus’ body had a vision of angels who told them Jesus was alive. Beyond the birth narratives in the opening chapters, Luke adds very little to the biblical understanding of angels.

The Gospel of John reveals even less than Luke does, mentioning angels three times. At least one is quite interesting. John 1:51 has Jesus speaking to Nathaniel, one of the first two disciples John records, the other being Philip. There Jesus tells Nathaniel that he will “see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” It appears at first glance that Jesus is appropriating Jacob’s earlier dream of the ladder between

¹⁷¹ UBS 4 gives the text of Luke 22 an [A] rating without vv. 43-44, indicating they strongly believe the verses are not original to Luke’s text, Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, Allen Wikgren, Barbara Aland, and Johannes Karavidopoulos, eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2000).

earth and heaven, and applying it to himself.¹⁷² However, as Van der Watt notes, the only real similarity between John and Genesis is the action of the angels.¹⁷³ This is still enough for one's purposes here to say the angels migrate between heaven and earth.

The book of Acts continues the general biblical portrayal of angels presented to this point. The angel of the Lord opens doors and gates in Acts in 5:19 and 12:10, like opening Jesus' tomb. Acts 7:30, 7:35, 7:38, and 7:53 emphasize that an angel appeared to Moses at Sinai. The same angel gave Moses the law.

In Acts 8:26, the angel of the Lord directs Philip to go to the road that goes between Jerusalem and Gaza. The Greek text underlying the NRSV's "road," is *τὴν ὁδόν*.¹⁷⁴ It is like the OT's *דֶּרֶךְ*, road, which one surveyed previously, and continues the idea that the angel of the Lord is a guide.¹⁷⁵

Acts 10:3 records that an angel of God appeared to Cornelius to give him a message from God. The story has great similarity to angelic appearances in Genesis, as well as to those chronicled in Matthew and Luke. No description of the angel appears, but 10:3 and 10:7 both verify the angel spoke.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Borchert sees the brief pericope involving Jesus and Nathaniel as firmly in the Jacob tradition, contrasting Nathaniel, in whom there is no guile, with Jacob the deceiver, Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*. ed. E. Ray Clendenen, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 147. However, in seeing the connection with Jacob, he says little about the ladder at Bethel, except to write, "God ... makes the divine presence known on earth just as it happened to Jacob at Bethel and more decisively as it took place in the incarnation of Jesus," *ibid.*, 149.

¹⁷³ He writes, "Die vergelyking toon dat die enigste raakpunt tussen die twee tekste die verwysing na die engele wat opvaar en neerdaal is," Jan G. Van der Watt, "Intertekstualiteit En Oorinterpretasie: Verwysings Na Genesis 28:12 in Johannes 1:51?," *In Die Skriflig* 50, no. 3 (2016): 1.

¹⁷⁴ Although one mentions Hebrews 9 and its discussion of the heavenly and earthly tabernacle elsewhere, it is worth noting here that the word for "road," *ὁδός*, appears in Hebrews 9:8, where it says, "...the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing." See Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 691-692.

¹⁷⁵ Marshall sees in this, and other angelic accounts, divine guidance, writing, "At every critical stage the church and its missionaries are guided by God, through his angel, the Spirit or a prophet, and hence they move in the divinely ordained direction," I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*. (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 1970), 112.

¹⁷⁶ Acts recounts this story again in 10:22 and 11:13.

Acts 12 has the story of an angel of the Lord delivering Peter from jail (12:7),¹⁷⁷ as one notes in the angelic descriptions above. However, a very curious detail from this story is in Acts 12:15. After the angel of the Lord rescues Peter from prison, Peter then goes to the house of Mary, John Mark's mother, where people had gathered for prayer. When Rhoda, a servant of the house, answered the door upon which Peter knocked, she was overjoyed at Peter's voice and ran, without opening the gate, to report that Peter had arrived. Those gathered did not believe her, saying, "It is his angel."

Daube believes this passage indicates that the people gathered for prayer held to the idea that when a righteous person dies, they become an angel.¹⁷⁸ If this is true, those gathered understand Herod to have executed Peter and Peter's angel has come. Another popular view is that the episode reveals a belief in guardian angels.¹⁷⁹ The exact meaning of this text is not necessary for one's purposes here. One only needs to demonstrate that the angel of God speaks and guides.

Acts 12:23 also continues a biblical tradition of angels taking the lives of humans, as previously noted. Here an angel of the Lord strikes down Herod and worms eat the king. Herod had given a public speech and the people proclaimed that his was the voice of a god, not a mortal, and Herod did not deny this nor give glory to the Lord.

¹⁷⁷ The text of Acts 12:7 said that the angel stood (in Peter's cell) and there was a light in the building. It may be that the light came from the angel's appearance, but this is not certain. Van der Bergh argues that the passage has symbolic value in the light driving away the darkness of death, Ronald H. Van der Bergh, "The Contrasting Structure of Acts 12:5-17: A Spatial Reading," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 69, no. 1 (2013): 2.

¹⁷⁸ David Daube, "On Acts 23: Sadducees and Angels," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109, no. 3 (Autumn, 1990): 496. Kistemaker argues for the same, stating it comes from the Talmud. However, he does not provide evidence from the Talmud, but instead cites one commentator, Simon J. Kistemaker, *Acts*. Baker New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 441.

¹⁷⁹ Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 176. As Polhill admits, the evidence for belief in a personal, guardian angel is scant, leaving many questions, Polhill, *Acts*, 282.

Another interesting angel reference debated by scholars is Acts 23:8. In Paul's defense before the Sanhedrin, Luke includes a parenthetical comment that the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection, or angel or spirit. Many read this text to mean that they do not believe in the existence of angels or spirits, but there appears to be little historical evidence understanding Luke in this way.¹⁸⁰ As verse 9 points out that the Pharisees believe in "both," one must assume, co-textually, that angels and spirits are one category since the resurrection is the focus of the pericope.

Instead, Bamberger argues that Luke is either using the three words together to deny the existence of an unseen reality, or that the angel and spirit of v. 8 goes with v. 9, where the Pharisees argue that an angel or spirit may have spoken with Paul. If the latter is true, then what the Sadducees deny is supernatural revelation from an angel or spirit, rather than their existence.¹⁸¹

Daube, apparently without knowledge of Bamberger, argues convincingly that the Sadducees did not believe that the angelic spirit of a deceased person could return to speak, since the spirit died with a person's body. Nor was there any interim place, or intermediate state, into which a pool of souls entered in wait, since there was nothing for which to wait. In the co-text of Acts, they assumed that since Jesus was dead, and since there was no resurrection, there was no way an angelic spirit of Jesus could return to speak to Paul. In this way, the focus remains the resurrection, and the angels and spirits remain tied to the resurrection.¹⁸² This position seems to make more sense.

¹⁸⁰ So Bernard J. Bamberger, "The Sadducees and the Belief in Angels," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82, no. 4 (December 1963): 433.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 435.

¹⁸² Daube, "On Acts 23: Sadducees and Angels," 494-497.

The final angelic episode in Acts is 27:23, where an angel of God appears to Paul and tells him that the ship on which he is sailing will be lost, but not one person will die. This is because God granted them safety. This text not only affirms again that angels speak to people on behalf of God, but perhaps also reaffirms the OT portrayal of angels guarding one's path or road. In this case, the journey would be a sea voyage.

Passages containing angels appear fourteen times in Paul's corpus as well, with six of these in the Corinthian correspondences, and it is with the pertinent correspondences that one begins.¹⁸³ Since many of Paul's uses are rhetorical, this overview is not exhaustive.

1 Cor. 6:3 is the first reference to which one will turn attention.¹⁸⁴ There Paul argues that Christians will be the judge of angels. Although the meaning of the passage is unclear, Thiselton argues from other NT passages that this likely refers to wicked angels.¹⁸⁵ This picture adds little to the understanding of John's metaphor.

2 Cor. 11:14 says that Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light and Paul goes on to say that false apostles and deceitful workers are the ministers of Satan. In other words, some people are not what they appear and not all angels are good. Similarly, in 2 Cor. 12:7, Paul speaks of his thorn in the flesh, and calls this person an angel of Satan.¹⁸⁶ Whether Paul intends

¹⁸³ Paul's use of angels in Rom. 8:38, among the list of things that cannot "separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord," is a reference used for the sake of argument and one should not understand it as teaching much about angels.

¹⁸⁴ 1 Cor. 4:9, like Rom. 8:38, is not significant to this discussion. There Paul again makes an argument that the apostles are a spectacle to the world, which includes angels and mortals. Paul's rhetorical uses of angels, while important, do not fit the narrative motifs necessary for finding associated common places and points of analogical contact. For more on such rhetorical functions, see D. Francois Tolmie, "Angels as Arguments? The Rhetorical Function of References to Angels in the Main Letters of Paul," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 67, no. 1 (2011).

¹⁸⁵ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 431.

¹⁸⁶ One here believes Paul's thorn is a person, perhaps even an angel, which troubles Paul, and is not the typical physical malady many ascribe to this passage. Num. 33:55 and Jos. 23:13 are two instances where thorns in the sides or flesh of people are individuals. For a good summary of the positions, read Ronald Russell, "Redemptive Suffering and Paul's Thorn in the Flesh," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39, no. 4 (December 1996). Hood couples this thorn with Paul's ascension to paradise and the third heaven. He believes Paul saw the heavenly temple, which Hood calls the church. In coming back to earth, Paul needs something to keep him humble after such an

this as metaphor or another form of figurative language is difficult. However, it appears to fit his previous assertion that deceivers are ministers of Satan. What is helpful here for Revelation is that the angels are messengers. In fact, some translations call them messengers and not angels. Even in the case of Satan, angels are messengers.

Galatians 1:8 and 2 Thess. 1:7 both align angels with heaven, consistent with other passages. 2 Thess. 1:7 is an eschatological text, which, like Matthew, also connects angels with the end of the age and coming with Christ at the end. Colossians 2:18 prohibits the worship of angels, which, while important in other of Revelation's co-texts, is not important in the angels are stars metaphor.

Moving on from Paul, the Hebrew writer in Hebrews 1:4-7, 13, records that Christ is superior to the angels and they are his servants. This image is consistent with the metaphor in Revelation 1 in that Christ holds the angels in his right hand and they carry his messages to the seven churches.

Hebrews 12:22 briefly notes that there are innumerable angels, which makes John's choice of seven more significant. Hebrews 13:2 states that in showing hospitality, some may entertain angels unaware. Presumably, this refers to the possibility of angels appearing as men, as they have in the OT passages.

1 Peter 3:22 says that Jesus has gone into heaven, is at the right of the Father, and the angels are subject to him. One assumes in the co-text that the angels are heavenly as well. 2 Peter 2:4 avers that angels can sin and that God did not spare them when they did. Jude 6 concurs. These references seem to have no bearing on the metaphor at hand.

exaltation. This is the role of the divinely given thorn, or as Hood defines it, "the death of Jesus we always carry around in our body," based on 2 Cor. 4:10, Jason B. Hood, "The Temple and The Thorn: 2 Corinthians 12 and Paul's Heavenly Ecclesiology," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 21, no. 3 (2011): 369.

In summary, one concludes that the most important elements of a biblical overview of angels is that they are heavenly and their primary function is that of messengers. Given this early portrayal of angels as messengers of God who can navigate between heaven and earth, it is not surprising that angels appear in John's metaphor in Revelation 1.

The ascended and heavenly Jesus is walking among the lampstands, which are the churches, and has stars in his hand, which are angels, and Jesus gives the angels seven letters for the seven churches. The whole scene is one where heaven and earth merge and the angelic role of messengers who can ascend and descend between heaven and earth is in view.

2.2.3 *Overview of Stars in Biblical and Extrabiblical Texts*

In the search for associated common places in the metaphor of the angels are the (seven) stars, one begins here as well by tracing an overview of the use of stars in biblical and certain extrabiblical material that may contribute to potential metaphorical links for John.

Surprisingly, stars only appear 37 times in the BHS OT and 24 in UBS 5 NT. The normal depiction of stars in the Bible is the large classification of "the stars," often describing them as too numerous to count.¹⁸⁷ There are few adjectives or numbers correlating to the stars. Still, several important qualifiers do exist.

¹⁸⁷ E.g. Gen. 1:16, 15:5, 22:17, 26:4. See also Leland Ryken, Jim Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, Colin Duriez, Douglas Penney, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 813-814. The declaration that the stars are too numerous to count is often in the context of the descendants of Abraham being as numerous as the stars in heaven or the sand on the seashore, as in Neh. 9:23 and 1 Chron. 27:23.

That stars are a heavenly creation is clear,¹⁸⁸ and, as part of the heaven and earth duality that exists throughout the Bible, stars are heavenly bodies separated from that which is earthly.¹⁸⁹ Genesis 1:16 presumes the stars, כוכב, are in the heavens, together with the sun and the moon,¹⁹⁰ and Gen. 15:5 places them implicitly in the heavens. Additionally, Genesis 1:16-17 includes the stars, along with the sun and moon, as giving light upon the earth and separating light from darkness. The same light-giving quality is in Isa. 13:10, where the stars, sun, and moon, all cease giving their light as a sign of judgment in the oracle against Babylon.¹⁹¹ Jer. 31:35 also sees the stars giving light to the night.¹⁹² Psalm 148:3 writes of the “shining stars.”¹⁹³ These passages, assigning stars to heaven and portraying them as light givers, are the most likely associations with Revelation 1:12-20 and its metaphor of stars and angels.

In Gen. 22:17, God blesses Abraham, tells him that his offspring will be numerous as the stars,¹⁹⁴ and the LXX explicitly adds to stars the genitive qualifier τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, of the heavens.¹⁹⁵ The Hebrew reflects the same idea in the construct form, describing offspring as numerous as the

¹⁸⁸ וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים, God made, is the assertion in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:16, as it relates to the sun, moon, and stars.

The LXX asserts the same, ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός.

¹⁸⁹ Since stars are in the heavenly realms, when some stars fall to earth, at least in the biblical narrative (perhaps tied to the astronomical phenomenon of meteoroids and meteorites), it is in the context of some catastrophe or unhappy situation, as in Daniel 8:10, Rev. 6:13, 8:10, 9:1, and 12:4.

¹⁹⁰ LXX Gen. 37:9, Deut. 4:19, Ec. 12:2, Joel 3:15, Isa. 13:10, Jer. 38:36, all pair the stars with the sun and moon.

¹⁹¹ Ezek. 32:7, Joel 2:10, Joel 4:15 are similar oracles with the stars, sun, and moon darkened. So too, Job 3:9, Job 9:7, Job 25:5, which all appear to have the stars darkened using figurative terms. Eccl. 12:2 compares old age to when “the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened...” It is a plea to “Remember the creator in the days of your youth...” from 12:1. These passages, from poetic, prophetic, and wisdom text types (or genres) include the association of stars with light.

¹⁹² Ps. 136:9, a verse amid a poem praising God for creation, notes that God made “the moon and the stars to rule over the night.” In 136:7, the psalmist declares God is the one who made the great lights and goes on to include the sun, moon, and stars. Thus, the idea of ruling over the night is about light.

¹⁹³ The “shining stars” is NRSV. BHS calls them stars of light, כֹּל כֹּכַבֵּי אֹר, kōl kō-kāḇ ’ôr.

¹⁹⁴ See also Exod. 32:13, Deut. 1:10, Deut. 10:22, and Deut. 28:62.

¹⁹⁵ The same genitive description is in LXX Gen 26:4, 1 Chron. 27:23, Esdras B 19:23 (Nehemiah 9:23), Isa. 14:13, and 1 Enoch 21:6.

stars of heaven, כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם. Revelation 6:13 is a NT example of an identical description of the stars of heaven.

Job 38:7 is an important OT wisdom text for potentially understanding Revelation 1:12-20. There the author uses synthetic parallelism to associate stars and heavenly beings.¹⁹⁶ God is questioning Job, asking in 38:4, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?” He continues in 38:6-7, asking, “... who laid its [earth] cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and the heavenly beings shouted for joy?” The use of anthropomorphism with singing stars, combined with heavenly beings shouting is the closest association of stars and possible angels to this point in the OT.

Daniel 8:10 describes a little horn, likely a submerged metaphor for a king, which grows as “high as the host of heaven,” and it “threw down to the earth some of the host and some of the stars, and trampled on them.” Although host in the OT often refers to angels,¹⁹⁷ the host in Daniel is widely viewed as another term for the stars of heaven.¹⁹⁸ Going further, Keil sees the stars as representing the people of God, or the saints, based on Dan. 8:24.¹⁹⁹ If this is true, as Mangano agrees, then this is an example of a submerged metaphor using the stars as a vehicle and the people of God as the tenor.²⁰⁰ Although John’s metaphor likely has a different nuance, it sets a metaphorical precedent nonetheless.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Dorsey defines synthetic parallelism as “two matching lines,” in Hebrew poetry where “the second line in one way or another furthers the thought of the first line,” Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi*, 18.

¹⁹⁷ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*. ed. E. Ray Clendenen, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 226.

¹⁹⁸ Mark Mangano, *Esther & Daniel*. ed. Terry Briley and Paul Kissling, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing, 2001), 262.

¹⁹⁹ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, “Daniel,” in *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 9:688.

²⁰⁰ Mangano, *Esther & Daniel*, 262. Miller calls the stars a symbol for the saints where one views stars as the vehicle of a metaphor, Miller, *Daniel*, 226.

²⁰¹ Daniel 12:3 speaks of stars in a simile. The wise will shine like the expanse of the sky and like stars, forever and ever. The verse twice uses the Hebrew prefixed preposition כִּי, “like” or “as”, with both the words for brightness and stars, indicating the simile.

In addition to the above OT survey, both extrabiblical material and the NT, in Rev. 2:28 and 22:16, along with Sirach 50:6 have a morning star. Sirach describes Simon son of Onias as, ὡς ἀστὴρ ἑωθινὸς ἐν μέσῳ νεφελῶν, “like the morning star among the clouds.”²⁰² Revelation uses a different word for morning in both of its references. In 2:28, Jesus, speaking to the one who overcomes in the church at Thyatira, says he will give to this one the morning star, ἀστέρα τὸν πρωῒνόν. In 22:16, Jesus declares that he is the bright morning star, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωῒνός.

2 Baruch 51:5-10 indicates that the righteous will become magnificent, like the angels, and that they will also become ageless, and able to change into any shape they wish, because they will be “like the angels and be equal to the stars.”²⁰³

In the NT, modifiers of stars other than the cardinal numbers in Revelation, are also few. Matthew records the star from the East as “his star,” in Matthew 2:2 and later “the star” in Matthew 2:7, 9, and 10, which refer to “his star”, all in the context of the birth of Jesus.²⁰⁴

Other NT passages, which address stars in general, also provide guidance. Matthew 24:29 carries on the OT tradition of the sun and moon darkening at the end of the age, or the Day of the Lord. However, instead of the stars darkening, here they fall from heaven.²⁰⁵

Luke prefers a slight variation of the root for star, ἀστροις, instead of ἀστὴρ, or ἀστερες, as it appears in Luke 21:25 where he lists stars with the sun and moon and says that the coming of

²⁰² Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*.

²⁰³ James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. vol. 1 (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1983), 638.

²⁰⁴ Scholarly literature debates the nature and identity of this star, generally dividing into two main camps. The first is a “natural astronomical phenomenon,” and the second a “miraculous event,” John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster, 2005), 110. Hagner sees 2 Pet. 1:19 as referring to Jesus as the morning star and a lamp shining in a dark place, Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 28. The text there uses a *hapax legomenon* in the NT, φωσφόρος, morning star, Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 1073.

²⁰⁵ Nolland sees this passage in the general tradition of “reducing brightness” related to the sun, moon, and stars. The specific reason for the reducing brightness of the stars here in Matt. 24 is that they fall from heaven, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 982. So too, Mark 13:25.

the Son of Man will shake the powers of heaven. He uses it in Acts 7:43 in the mouth of Stephen as he disputes before the high priest. Stephen outlines how God turned away from Israel as they worshipped the host of heaven, which Stephen specifically identifies as the worship of “the star of your god Rephan.”²⁰⁶ In this respect, the location of the stars in heaven is significant as it fits the overwhelming pattern for associated common places here.²⁰⁷

In Jude 13, godless men are like wandering stars, ἀστέρες πλανῆται.²⁰⁸ Revelation 8:10 sees a great star, ἀστὴρ μέγας, falling from heaven, and its name is Wormwood. The stars falling from heaven here, as in Matthew and the other OT references above, further signals that stars can move between heaven and earth. However, in the case of falling, it appears that these stars perhaps have a permanent existence on earth and cannot go back into heaven.

Another significant issue, as shown below, is John’s use of the cardinal number seven as a descriptor for stars. Other than the few descriptions above, cardinal numbers are the only direct modifiers of stars in biblical and extrabiblical material. Concerning these cardinals, the OT has only Gen. 37:9, which recounts Joseph’s dream of eleven stars, ἑνδεκα ἀστέρες, and how they were bowing down to him. Revelation 12:1 has the twelve stars, ἀστέρων δώδεκα, which serve as a crown to the woman whom the dragon is attempting to devour.

Additionally, 1 Enoch 18:13 and 21:3, both allude to seven stars, and these may be precedents for John, but this is unlikely. In the case of 1 Enoch 18:13, the seven stars are seven

²⁰⁶ The exact identification of this god is uncertain. Page posits it is perhaps linked with Saturn, Thomas Elthelbert Page, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London: Macmillan, 1897), 127. So too Polhill, who gives its origin as possibly an Egyptian word for Saturn, Polhill, *Acts*, 201. Parsons does not address its origin, Parsons, *Acts*, 101.

²⁰⁷ Hebrews 11:12 uses the same word as Luke, identifying the stars as heavenly, and as numerous as the sand by the seashore. It is consistent with the motif of stars in both the OT and NT.

²⁰⁸ Louw-Nida argues for a translation of “stars that do not remain where they should stay,” or “do not remain in the right places,” Louw and Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 1:7.

sinful angels whom God binds for ten thousand years.²⁰⁹ In 21:3, the same stars are in view but God has bound them for “numberless years.”²¹⁰

While the “seven stars are angels” bears similar metaphorical value, one wonders about their descriptions as sinful. It is possible, given Jesus’ rebukes to five of the angels via the letters to the churches in Rev. 2-3, that these five are sinful like the seven in 1 Enoch, but this does not account for the two churches and two angels for whom Jesus has no rebuke.

In moving to a discussion of the symbolic value of the number seven below, it should strike the reader as significant that John uses the cardinal number seven to tell how many stars there are in relation to the churches. Even though the one to one ratio seems quite normal in Revelation 1 because John makes it so, the limiting of the number of stars by a cardinal number is rare in the biblical corpus, even if the number seven itself is ubiquitous.

Since the number seven is the modifier of stars, it is exigent to consider this number now as a symbol for John’s purposes.

2.2.4 *The Number Seven as Symbol*

There is a strong belief that the number seven is significant as a symbol in the ANE, particularly among the Jews, although the reasons for this are varied.²¹¹ Josephus illustrates this with regard to the Jews, in his description of the pageants (parades) of the Romans whereby they displayed the spoils of war, noting that in one such parade the items taken from the Jerusalem

²⁰⁹ 1 Enoch 19:1 immediately follows the seven stars passage and discusses angels who mingle with women, leading these women to become sirens, and causing men to burn incense to demons. The near co-text seems to indicate the angels are stars.

²¹⁰ “*The Lexham English Septuagint*,” ed. Rick Brannan et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012).

²¹¹ Yarbrow Collins gives a critical synopsis of many popular views regarding the meaning of the number seven, Adela Yarbrow Collins, “Numerical Symbolism in Jewish and Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1984).

temple were the greatest treasures.²¹² A part of these spoils was the temple candlestick and Josephus writes that the candlestick had seven lamps, which “represented the dignity of the number seven among the Jews.”²¹³ Philo, too, states, “And I know not if any one [sic] would be able to celebrate the nature of the number seven in adequate terms, since it is superior to every form of expression.”²¹⁴

From a contemporary standpoint, scholars universally understand that the number seven, at least in the book of Revelation, is symbolic.²¹⁵ For instance, Roloff states, “That there are seven churches is not surprising, in view of the great symbolic significance of the number seven in Revelation...”²¹⁶ Boxall, without immediately explaining the meaning of the symbol, agrees with Roloff, believing that the symbolism of the number of seven “must be to the fore.”²¹⁷

Lowery, noting that nearly two-thirds of the uses of the number seven in the New Testament are in Revelation, records seven churches, spirits, angels, seals, trumpets, thunders, bowls, plagues, lampstands, stars, lamps, heads, crowns, horns, eyes, mountains, kings, and “even the slaying of seven thousand.”²¹⁸ He goes on to note that seven appears in implicit ways as well, reminding the reader that the Lamb is worthy to receive seven accolades in Rev. 5:12,

²¹² Schmidt sees Josephus’ description as a parade with floats as well, Emily A. Schmidt, “The Flavian Triumph and the Arch of Titus: The Jewish God in Flavian Rome,” (2010). <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/9xw0k5kh> (accessed 26 January 2016), 3.

²¹³ Josephus, “Wars of the Jews,” 7.149.

²¹⁴ Philo, “On the Creation,” in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 13.

²¹⁵ While scholars and serious Bible students recognize the value and limits of numerology, Cole correctly points out that some Christian groups avoid the study of biblical numerology because of the extreme and mystical views of those who see a symbol behind every number, even those which are used in the most factual of ways, R. Alan Cole, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), s.v. “Numbers and Numerology.”

²¹⁶ Roloff, *The Revelation of John*, 33.

²¹⁷ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 41.

²¹⁸ Robert Lowery, *Revelation's Rhapsody: Listening to the Lyrics of the Lamb*. (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2006), 109.

that there are seven parts of creation listed in 6:12-14, and that there are seven divisions of humanity in 6:15.²¹⁹

The appearance of the number seven in implicit ways is another way of introducing what Gaechter, among others, terms heptads.²²⁰ Explicit heptads, obvious structures that mention the number seven, such as seven seals, trumpets, and bowls, are not difficult to find. Implicit heptads,²²¹ such as the ones Lowery notes, are more difficult to recognize, but their potential symbolic impact may be just as great.²²²

It is one thing to recognize that the number is symbolic; it is another to determine why it is symbolic and what the symbol means. As the survey of the number seven below in the ANE demonstrates, the culturally agreed upon meaning of the symbol appears to be multivalent at best and extraordinarily vague at worst.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Paul Gaechter S.J., "Semitic Literary Forms in the Apocalypse and Their Import," *Theological Studies* 8, no. 4 (December 1947): 547. Aune uses the term as well, Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, cxxiii. Hasel notes that the term *hebdomad* is sometimes used synonymously with heptad, based on the LXX, at least as it refers to the seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24, Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Hebrew Masculine Plural For "Weeks" in the Expression "Seventy Weeks" in Daniel 9:24," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 31, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 105. Wold uses the term septet synonymously with heptad, although septet often affiliates with musical composition, Benjamin Wold, "Revelation's Plague Septets: New Exodus and Exile," in *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament*, ed. García Martínez Florentino, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah (Leiden: Brill, 2009). Similarly, when discussing the plagues of Exodus in Revelation, Hall uses septet as well, Gary Hall, "The Plagues of the Exodus in the Book of Revelation," in *Dragons, John, and Every Grain of Sand: Essays on the Book of Revelation in Honor of Dr. Robert Lowery*, ed. Shane J. Wood (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2011), 42-43. Ford uses the term septet exclusively, J. Massynberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 38 (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 46. Beale primarily uses septet but also uses heptad to describe Revelation's series of sevens, Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 63, 127. Beale and McDonough briefly use septet in Beale and McDonough, "Revelation," 1110.

²²¹ Boxall calls these implicit septets, Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 17.

²²² E.g. Sarna notes that a "Levitical choir in the second temple chanted each day of the week a chapter of the Psalter to accompany the libation of wine," and that they chanted Psalm 92 on the Sabbath. Since Psalm 92 uses the name YHWH seven times, Sarna wonders if this is not another reason for chanting this Psalm on the seventh day, Nahum M. Sarna, "The Psalm for the Sabbath Day (Ps 92)," in *Studies in Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2000), 406. Sarna further offers as additional examples later synagogue Sabbath liturgy, the Amidah prayer, which contains seven benedictions, and Psalm 29, which, repeats, קול יהוה, the voice of the Lord, seven times, *ibid.* Later Gnostic texts also draw upon explicit and implicit heptads. E.g., the archons created seven powers, the fourth of which had seven heads, and the seventh power they name Sabbede, who has a shining fire-face. This last power represents "the sevenness of the week," Frederik Wisse, "The Apocryphon of John (II, 1, III, 1, IV, 1, and BG 8502, 2)," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M. Robinson (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 111. In the same article, Wisse dates the Apocryphon prior to 185 C.E.

One of the universal assertions is the number seven relates in some way to the cosmos. As one notes above, Caird, among others, attributes the symbolism of seven to the fact that there were seven planets. Perhaps seven represents a kind of cosmological harmony or power. He does not say. Again, it is one thing to indicate the symbol relates to the planets, it is another to demonstrate how.

However, for several reasons, the idea of seven as related to planets or the cosmos is probably unlikely. First, as one will show below, the number seven correlates with a myriad of substantives in multiple languages, across multiple cultures, and the early literature of the ANE rarely integrates this number with planets. That does not preclude it from being so; just that one would expect to see it more regularly to conclude this association. In writing this, one also recognizes that ancients may have used the word “stars” as it exists today, interchangeably for planets,²²³ but even so, the number seven stands apart.

Moreover, at least from a purely Greek standpoint, Rengstorf points out that the number seven had significance “long before Pythagoras fixed the number of planets at seven ...”²²⁴ He goes on to posit that the symbolic value derives from “the four phases of the moon in seven-day periods, unless of course, there is no rational explanation.”²²⁵

²²³ Louw and Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 1:7.

²²⁴ Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, s.v. “ἑπτὰ.” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

²²⁵ Ibid. Rengstorf, noting that Pythagoras had help from the Chaldeans, draws upon Roshcer, who writes, “Gegen diese Annahme spricht – abgesehen von anderen Gründen – namentlich auch die Erwägung, daß es für die Menschen der Urzeit unendlich viel leichter war, die Teilung des 28tägigen “Lichtmonats” in 4siebentägige Wochen als die Siebenzahl der Planeten zu entdecken. Man bedenke, daß ein so geist „n, „d scharf beobachtendes Volk wie das griechische die Siebenzahl der Pla „,,, seit Pythagoras erkannt hat, und zwar, wie es scheint, auch nicht selbständig, sondern erst mit Hilfe der chaldäischen Astrologen. Auch steht “Äs siebenzahl der Planeten im Altertum nicht einmal allgemein fest, indem z. B,” Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher, *Die Sieben- und Neunzahl im Kultus und Mythos der Griechen, nebst einem Anhang, Nachträge zu den “Enneadischen und hebdomadischen Fristen und Wochen” enthaltend*. (Leipzig: B.G. Tuebner, 1904), 75. This explanation of the week and the four phases of the moon ties in with the Hebrew creation story of Genesis 1, but also may play a role in events that last for seven days, as means of honor, such as Marcus Aurelius’ feast of seven days to honor the Roman gods prior to the Marcommanic Wars, H.D.M. Spence-Jones, *The Early Christians in Rome*. (London: Methuen & Co. LTD, 1910), 95.

However, though Rengstorf is correct to point out that the historical development regarding the seven planets appears late in literature, he may be correct in another assertion as well. He posits that the Babylonians took over the sacred number seven from the Sumerians.²²⁶ Considering this, one here traces certain evidences of the propensity of the number seven in ancient Babylonian and Sumerian literature as evidence of its importance in the ANE,²²⁷ and then attempts to trace it in OT traditions as well as the NT.

2.2.4.1 *The Number Seven in the Ancient Near East*

Hasel calls the Babylonian Atrahasis epic the oldest of the Old Babylonian epics.²²⁸ In it, as Hasel points out, one can read of the “seven senior-gods (Anunnaki),” who were making the

²²⁶ Rengstorf, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* s.v. “ἑπτὰ.” ed. Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

²²⁷ One disagrees with Yarbro Collins that the only important evidence for studying numerical symbolism in Revelation is to examine contemporary literature to John, Yarbro Collins, “Numerical Symbolism in Jewish and Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature,” 1223. Such an approach specifically fails to consider the enormous debt Revelation owes to the OT. However, this survey will not include literature after John’s general period, but it recognizes that even in much later Christian and Islamic texts, the number seven is significant. For example, regarding Muhammad’s ascension, he is said to be “borne aloft by a mythical steed through the seven heavens of the ancient and medieval cosmologies to stand in the presence of God,” so Francis E. Peters, *Islam: A Guide for Jews and Christians*. (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 64. See also the later Christian myth of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, Sabine Baring-Gould, “The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus,” in *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* (Oxford; Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1877). Muhammad apparently drew on this myth of the seven sleepers in his preaching, indicating it predated him, Gerhard Endress, *Islam: An Historical Introduction*. ed. Carole Hillenbrand, trans., Carole Hillenbrand, *The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 26-27. It also recognizes but omits later Greco-Roman traditions, such as the marriage of Mercury to Philology where Mercury presents seven bridesmaids as a gift, which are the personified liberal arts, Michael Stolz, “Faith and the Intellectuals II,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100 - c. 1500*, ed. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 396. John Collins, noting that the *Bahman Yasht* writes of seven tree branches that are seven kingdoms, discusses the difficulty of understanding any influence of Persian literature on Jewish apocalypticism because of the late dates of extant materials, John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*. Second ed., *The Biblical Resource Series* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 30. Similarly, one notes but omits the trajectory of the number seven in modern cultures. E.g., Iranian and Kazak cultures celebrate the number seven during meals. Specifically, Eitzen writes of *Nawriz*, the Central Asian New Year, that both Iranians and Kazaks celebrate by placing seven symbolic items on the meal table, Hilda C. Eitzen, “*Nawriz* in Kazakhstan: Scenarios for Managing Diversity,” in *Contemporary Kazaks: Cultural and Social Perspectives*, ed. Ingvar Svanberg (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1999), 78.

²²⁸ Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis I In Relation to Ancient Near Parallels,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 10, (1972): 15.

junior gods work with physical labor.²²⁹ The junior gods complained of their work and so created man to do the work and relieve the gods of their labor.²³⁰

Babylonian liturgies also make use of the number seven regularly without defining its meaning. For instance, in an incantation against the evil eye, one must mix seven vases of “meal-water” with oil and apply the mixture to one’s face while saying the incantation.²³¹ In another fragmentary liturgy about Ur, a temple possesses “seven-dark chambers,”²³² and the only apparent words from another fragmentary liturgy includes an incantation against seven evil spirits.²³³

Langdon also discusses the appearance of seven *ub*, in a series of Babylonian temple liturgies. He translates them as seven regions, such as, “O Eanna of the seven regions,” but he is uncertain as to the proper definition. The subject of each line is the name of a temple and he wonders if the *ub* refer to the stages of a tower that one can find in each temple, or the tower itself, but concludes its cosmological significance is likely lost.²³⁴

Schüssler Fiorenza believes that the number seven has “... an affinity to the astral myths of late antiquity”.²³⁵ This certainly seems to be the case with Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian literature. Collins demonstrates how incantations from the magical traditions of these

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 16.

²³¹ Stephen Langdon, *Babylonian Liturgies: Sumerian Texts from the Early Period and From the Library of Ashurbanipal, For the Most Part Transliterated and Translated, With Introduction and Index*. (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1913), 11-12.

²³² Ibid., 64, 109.

²³³ Ibid., 77.

²³⁴ Ibid., 93.

²³⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 167. Although she also states “...the number seven ... was already an integrated element in Jewish beliefs and was the number of divine perfection and holiness,” *ibid.*

three cultures often invokes the “seven heavens,” writes of the seven “malefic spirits,” and that the number seven “... appears frequently in magical ritual.”²³⁶

Perhaps the most important ancient, non-biblical use of the number seven is the *Enuma Eliš*, or the *Enuma Elish*. King writes that it is an Assyrian poem recounting the creation of the world, and that it consists of 994 lines, divided into seven sections, with each section inscribed on a separate tablet.²³⁷ The obvious parallels in the content of the story to the Hebrew creation story make one wonder about the correlation of the seven tablets to the seven days of creation in Genesis 1.²³⁸

Determining the exact nature of this correlation is not an easy matter. Hasel, in outlining similarities between *Enuma Elish* and Genesis 1-3, demonstrates that many scholars once held that Genesis borrowed from the Babylonian epic. However, now, given the dates and other information known about the Babylonian periods, it is not possible to say with certainty that the Hebrew borrowed from the Babylonian.²³⁹

Heidel dates the tablets of the *Enuma Elish* as ranging from 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. and possibly even later, but notes the story is much older.²⁴⁰ Therefore, whether John was familiar

²³⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 28-29.

²³⁷ Leonard W. King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation: Or the Babylonian and Assyrian Legends Concerning the Creation of the World and Mankind*. II vols., Luzac Semitic Text and Translation Series, vol. I (London: Luzac and Co., 1902), xxv. Lambert states that the MSS are in both the scripts of Assyrian and Babylonian, but that the Assyrian scripts are the most numerous with 86 extant tablets or fragments, 46 from Nineveh, 25 from Assur, 13 from Sultantepe, and 2 from Nimrud. Strangely, Lambert later identifies 95 pieces of Babylonian script, of which he argues only seven came from excavations, while the others came from dealers, leaving their sources spurious. He apparently means that the Assyrian is more numerous from excavations or that 86 Assyrian pieces, by volume, are more numerous, Wifred G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*. (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 3-4. Additionally, one is aware here that many modern scholars use the term Akkadian and treat Assyrian and Babylonian as forms of the same language. George notes that the ancients did not know or use a common term like Akkadian and that the two supposed variants are significantly different as to warrant the potential of separate languages, Andrew George, "Babylonian and Assyrian: A History of Akkadian," in *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern*, ed. J.N. Postgate (Cambridge: The British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2007), 31.

²³⁸ Hasel presents a very helpful overview of issues regarding the parallels of these texts, though not with regard to the number seven, Hasel, "The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis I In Relation to Ancient Near Parallels."

²³⁹ Ibid., 3-4.

²⁴⁰ Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation*, 13.

with the *Enuma Elish*, this demonstrates that the number seven had significance early in ANE literature and probably in the ANE consciousness.

Correspondingly, in his book analyzing the Hebrew creation story in relation to the Sumerian and Babylonian creation stories, Radau notes that Ba-u, the wife of the Sumerian god Nin-Gur-Su, has seven sons. He understands that these “seven sons” stand for something beyond themselves and proffers three possibilities: they represent seven planets, the seven spirits of heaven, or the seven winds or evil spirits associated with Ramman.²⁴¹ He believes certain of the names of the seven sons compare with wind and concludes the seven sons are the seven winds.²⁴²

In yet another volume dedicated to the Hebrew creation story and its relationship to Sumerian literature, Hodge draws upon the Gudea Inscription, writing that the inscription “presents the temple as being purified seven times before it is ready for the deity to dwell within it.”²⁴³ This leads him to conclude that the number seven is a “symbol for temple purification.”²⁴⁴

Additionally, the cardinal number seven as a modifier is customary in other Sumerian records and its frequency may allude to its potentially symbolic value in that culture. For instance the temple in Adab, named Enamzu, dedicated to the chief goddess Nintu, “was particularly noteworthy for its seven gates and seven doors, each of which had a special

²⁴¹ Hugo Radau, *The Creation Story of Genesis -- 1: A Sumerian Theogony and Cosmogony*. (LaSalle, Illinois: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1902), 45.

²⁴² Ibid., 46. The image of seven sons is very common in Sumerian literature. One can also find it in c. 1.8.1.4, lines 1-28 and 254-267 of “Gilgameš, Enkidu, and the Netherworld”, The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.8.1.4&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc&lineid=c1814.1.254#c1814.1.254> (accessed 7 January 2016).

²⁴³ Bryan C. Hodge, *Revisiting the Days of Genesis: A Study of the Use of Time in Genesis 1-11 in Light of Its Ancient Near Eastern and Literary Context*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 54.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. However, given the many different uses of the number seven in Sumerian literature, it is impossible to conclude that it represents temple purification. It is better to see it as something like completion, which is why the priest purified the temple seven times. Hodge uses selective texts and contexts to reach his limited conclusion.

name.”²⁴⁵ Lugalannemundu, the Sumerian king, dedicated this temple by sacrificing “seven times seven of fattened oxen and fattened sheep.”²⁴⁶

During the reign of Shulgi of the Third Dynasty of Ur, the court of Nippur had seven royal judges, perhaps acting as a Sumerian supreme court.²⁴⁷ Whether this number has significance in this context is unknown, but given the prevalence for the number in Sumerian literature, one wonders.

A basic search of “seven” in the Electronic Corpus of Sumerian Literature composed by the University of Oxford, also reveals a great deal about the number seven as a modifier, as one summarizes below.

In the story of *Enki and Ninhursagâ*, one reads of seven months being as seven days.²⁴⁸ *Enki’s Journey to Nibru* recounts seven singers²⁴⁹ and seven drums,²⁵⁰ while in *Enlil and Ninlil*, the “seven gods who decide destinies arrest Enlil” are apparently a subset of gods amongst a previously mentioned fifty.²⁵¹

²⁴⁵ Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 51.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 86.

²⁴⁸ Enki and Ninhursagâ, c. 1.1.1, lines 75-87, “Enki and Ninhursagâ”, The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.1.1&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc&lineid=c111.75#c111.75> (accessed 7 January 2016). Lines 126r-126cc repeat the same. Seven days are also found at c.1.5.1, lines 349-352, in “Nanna-Suen’s Journey to Nibru”, The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.5.1&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc#> (accessed 17 November 2017).

²⁴⁹ “Singers” is missing from the manuscript and is a later interpolation, see Enki’s Journey to Nibru, c. 1.1.4, lines 62-67, “Enki’s Journey to Nibru”, The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.1.4&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc&lineid=c114.62#c114.62> (accessed 7 January 2016).

²⁵⁰ Lines 117-129, *ibid.*

²⁵¹ See c. 1.2.1, lines 54-64, “Enlil and Ninlil”, The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.2.1&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc&lineid=c121.54#c121.54> (accessed 7 January 2016). Kramer notes these seven gods were also called “the great gods,” Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 115. He also speculates that these seven may have been An, Enlil, Enki, Ninhursag, Nanna-Sin, Utu, and Inanna, *ibid.*, 122. Langdon notes that Enlil himself, called Enmešarra, has seven sons. Babylonian psalmists made seven figures of dough and paste as part of a psalmist ritual, Langdon, *Babylonian Liturgies: Sumerian Texts from the Early Period and From the Library of Ashurbanipal, For the Most Part Transliterated and Translated, With Introduction and Index*, xiii. In the same ritual Enlil relates with Taurus and his seven sons with Pleiades.

The story of *Inana and Ebiḫ* portrays Inana brandishing a seven-headed weapon²⁵² and in *Inana and Šu-kale-tuda*, Inana wears a loincloth of the seven divine powers covering her genitals,²⁵³ which Šu-kale-tuda removes prior to raping her.²⁵⁴ When Inana searches for Šu-kale-tuda, to punish his acts, she takes with her seven times seven helpers.²⁵⁵

When Inana descends into the netherworld, one reads there are seven gates of the underworld.²⁵⁶ While she is there, one also reads of seven judges and seven demons.²⁵⁷

The number figures prominently in the stories of Lugalbanda.²⁵⁸ In *Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave*, there are seven heroes of Sumer briefly mentioned, and later, Lugalbanda, in the absence of an oven, chooses to bake bread over seven coals, and in text that is nearly indecipherable, apparently due to manuscript damage, one reads of seven who stand in battle called the seven torches of battle.²⁵⁹

²⁵² See c. 1.3.2, lines 53-58, "Inana and Ebiḫ", The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.3.2&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc&lineid=c132.53#c132.53> (accessed 7 January 2016).

²⁵³ Inana also takes these powers with her to the netherworld, see c. 1.4.1, lines 14-19 and 102-107 in "Inana's Descent to the Netherworld", The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.4.1&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc&lineid=c141.14#c141.14> (accessed 7 January 2016).

²⁵⁴ c. 1.3.3, lines 112-128, "Inana and Šu-kale-tuda", The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.3.3&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc&lineid=c133.112#c133.112> (accessed 7 January 2016). While The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature translates the encounter as Šu-kale-tuda having intercourse with Inana by removing the above loincloth while she is sleeping, Gadotti compellingly writes that one should translate this as rape, Alhena Gadotti, "Why It Was Rape: The Conceptualization of Rape in Sumerian Literature," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129, no. 1 (January-March 2009): 77-78.

²⁵⁵ Lines 185-205, "Inana and Šu-kale-tuda".

²⁵⁶ See lines 114-128 and 159-163, "Inana's Descent to the Netherworld". Kramer writes that Ereshkigal and Nergal rule the underworld and of "a palace with seven gates where Ereshkigal held court," Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 134.

²⁵⁷ The judges are in lines 164-172, and the demons in lines 348-353, "Inana's Descent to the Netherworld". Seven demons also enter into a sheepfold to find Dumuzid, apparently a shepherd, dead, in c. 1.4.3, lines 245-260, "Dumuzid's Dream", The University of Oxford <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.4.3&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc&lineid=c143.256#c143.256>.

²⁵⁸ The father of Gilgamesh (Gilgameš), c. 2000 B.C.E., so Jennifer Larson, "Lugalbanda and Hermes," *Classical Philology* 100, no. 1 (January 2005): 2. Noegel, who dates Lugalbanda's reign to 2800-2700 B.C.E., notes that the Sumerian epics are from the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112-2004 B.C.E.), although their subjects date to much earlier times, Scott B. Noegel, "Mesopotamian Epic," in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, ed. John Miles Foley, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005), 234-235.

²⁵⁹ *The Literature of Ancient Sumer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 18-21. Bendt includes helpful commentary on the verses surrounding the seven torches (7-me-eš) in battle and if one closely reads his translations of the cuneiform clay seals, there is significant word play in his poem demonstrating that these seven torches are

In another story of Lugalbanda, *Lugalbanda and the Anzud Bird*, there is an apparently magnificent tree with its roots resting “like snakes” in “Utu’s river of the seven mouths.”²⁶⁰

Continuing in the theme of Sumerian literary texts, Kramer records that in *Enki and the World Order*, a seven-day celebration for the gods follows the wedding of Ningirsu and Bau.²⁶¹

Another search of The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Royal Inscriptions for *imin*, the number seven,²⁶² reveals one dominant theme, that the “Ningirsu ... built his E-gidru, the temple of seven niches.”²⁶³ It appears seven times in the inscriptions, though one is not certain if this is intentional.

As one stated previously, none of these references explicitly define why the number seven is ubiquitous in Sumerian literature, but its frequent presence leads one to conclude that it was significant and the probability it is symbolic is high. Even if the symbolism differs from the Jewish understanding of the number, it indicates commonality in the ANE and guides the reader to avoid a literal understanding of the number.

While one did not complete an exhaustive search of Greco-Roman literature, there are several indications that this number is significant to the Greeks and Romans as well.

For example, Thrasybulus died of seven wounds from the Argives,²⁶⁴ there were seven sons of Iphicratides and Alexippa, six of whom died in battle before the wall of Messene, and the

avored in Inana’s heart, Alster Bendt, “Demons in the Conclusion of Lugalbanda and Hurrumkurra,” *Iraq* 67, no. 2 (Autumn 2005): 65.

²⁶⁰ *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, 23.

²⁶¹ Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 140.

²⁶² Nies includes a helpful index of Sumerian cardinal numbers, with the cuneiform symbol and transliterated script, including the number seven, *imin*. The symbol appears as seven arrows on two lines: four arrows pointing down on the top line, with three arrows pointing down on the bottom line, centered under the top four, see James B. Nies, *Ur Dynasty Tablets: Texts Chiefly From Tello and Drehem Written During the Reigns of Dungi, Bur-Sin, Gimil-Sin, and Ibi-Sin*. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1920), 107.

²⁶³ “The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Royal Inscriptions”, University of Pennsylvania <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/index.html> (accessed 2 February 2017).

²⁶⁴ Edward Capps, Thomas Elthelbert Page, and William Henry Denham Rouse, eds., *The Greek Anthology*, 5 vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 2 (London; New York: William Heinemann LTD; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1919), 131.

seventh returned with the ashes of his dead brothers to Sparta.²⁶⁵ Herodotus records a seven-year drought at Thera because they ignored the oracle of Delphi to plant a colony at Libya.²⁶⁶

Statius, in *Thebaid*, writes of Hypseus carrying, *clipei septemplice tauro laeva*, a seven-fold bull's hide shield.²⁶⁷ Catullus, in his poem which modern authors number as 11, writes of the sea, colored seven times over, by the silts of the Nile.²⁶⁸ In a letter to Brutus, Cicero writes of following advice from Solon, one of the seven wise men.²⁶⁹ M. Valerius Martialis, in "An Urban Villa," poetically describes the seven hills of Rome as "the seven hills that rule the world."²⁷⁰ An inscription regarding Munatius Plancus indicates he was a member of the Board of Seven priests who gave banquets in honor of Jupiter.²⁷¹

Quite interestingly, although the dates of the spells are unclear, the number seven appears several times in Greek magical texts. In one Greek healing spell, one must speak seven times "into the light of a lamp."²⁷² Similarly, in another Greek spell, one must repeat a prayer "seven times into the ear of the medium."²⁷³

These wounds apparently represent one wound each from the seven leaders of the Argives. For seven Argive leaders, see *ibid.*, 237.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

²⁶⁶ Peter J. Rhodes, *The Greek City States: A Sourcebook*. Second ed. (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 32.

²⁶⁷ Statius, *Statius with an English Translation*. ed. T.E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse, trans., J.H. Mozley, 2 vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 2 (London; New York: William Heinemann LTD; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 156-157. These same bulls are later likened as the leaders of the herd, *ibid.*, 543.

²⁶⁸ Francese and Smith, eds., *Ancient Rome: An Anthology of Sources*, 26.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 74. Solon is one of the seven sages of ancient Greece, listed fourth in name among the seven by Plato in Protagoras, Plato, *Plato with an English Translation*. ed. T.E. Page et al., trans., W.R.M. Lamb, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann LTD, 1952), 197.

²⁷⁰ Francese and Smith, eds., *Ancient Rome: An Anthology of Sources*, 211. While the seven hills are literal, there are more than seven hills in the area around Rome, perhaps indicating Rome's founders chose the seven for a reason.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 457. Francese and Smith further define the Board of Seven as "one of the priestly colleges of the city of Rome, responsible for organizing the annual sacrificial banquet in honor of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva during the Plebian Games in November," *ibid.*, 534.

²⁷² Samson Eitrem, "Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual," in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic & Religion*, ed. Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 185.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 186.

The number seven surfaces in a spell appealing to Eros, in which “the practitioner ... is to present Eros with ... seven cakes, seven pinecones ... and seven lamps.” Additionally, the practitioner must strangle seven birds.²⁷⁴ Another spell, which Kotansky entitles, “An Incantation of the Syrian Woman from Gadara,” recounts a fire that envelops seven springs of wolves, seven of bears, and seven of lions, and seven “dark-eyed maidens,” quench the fire with water.²⁷⁵ In a ceremony in which a scapegoat cleanses a community of “perceived impurities or pollution,” the practitioner is to strike the scapegoat on the penis seven times.²⁷⁶

While these are just a few of the references to the number seven in Greco-Roman literature, they are enough to demonstrate the potential symbolic meaning of the number seven in these cultures.

2.2.4.2 *The Number Seven in Non-Canonical Jewish Sources*

Within several non-canonical writings and non-biblical writings, belonging to the general provenance of Judaism before and during the time of John, the number seven appears frequently, indicating again its likely importance in the literature and ethos of authors and readers.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*. Blackwell Ancient Religions (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 98-99. The spell requires the lamps to “blaze with clear olive oil.”

²⁷⁵ Roy Kotansky, “Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic & Religion*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 112.

²⁷⁶ The difficulty in including this example is that its record by Tzetzes is very late (1130 C.E.), but Tzetzes claims it is from the ancient Greek writer Hipponax (6th century B.C.E.), John Scarborough, “The Pharmacology of Sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 147.

²⁷⁷ One constrains the search to literature, rather than, say, archaeology, where the number seven could also play an important role. For instance, given the popularity of the number, one wonders if the seven-meter high wall of the Hasmonean palace is coincidence or if they chose the height for its symbolism, Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*. Handbuch der Orientalistik (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 10. Similarly, one is curious about the eastern arch of the temple mount, near the southeast corner, which was seven meters by seven meters in width and length, *ibid.*, 31. The uncertainty around these early architectural phenomena links to later Jewish uses of seven in architecture as well. It seems that later Jewish structures clearly made use of seven as a symbol, e.g. the seven-band nave pavement in the Sepphoris synagogue, Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements: Themes, Issues, and Trends*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), 18.

One of the more significant possibilities regarding the appearance of the number seven in these documents is the tradition of seven heavens. Because John's Apocalypse revolves around heavenly activities, and the number seven appears frequently, speculation that a seven-heaven tradition, among others, may be influencing John is worth exploring.

While scholars dispute the origins of the *Testament of Levi* as Christian or Jewish, one includes it here given the OT background of the story as rooted in the person of Levi, Jacob's son.²⁷⁸ In this apocalyptic work, an angel shows Levi a vision of seven heavens, through which Levi passes and becomes a sort of priestly angel himself.²⁷⁹

The *Testament of Levi*, although seminal, is not alone in envisioning seven heavens.²⁸⁰ Himmelfarb notes the topic of the seven heavens from the *Testament of Levi* seems to be a part of an effort in later apocalypses, from the 1st century C.E. and on, to recast single heaven apocalypses into a seven-heaven mold.²⁸¹ However, Beyerle cautions that the notion of "five, seven, or even ten heavens is rather late, and obviously not pre-Christian."²⁸² If Beyerle is

²⁷⁸ For more on the date, content, and similarities with the *Book of the Watchers*, see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 30. Here Himmelfarb outlines that the source material for the *Testament of Levi* is a third century B.C.E. Aramaic document, along with the *Book of the Watchers*.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 30-32.

²⁸⁰ Segal briefly writes of the seven-heaven tradition in Merkabah Mysticism in Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism*. ed. Jacob Neusner, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), 66.

²⁸¹ Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 32. In a work bearing similarity to the *Testament of Levi*, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, potentially a late first century C.E. document, also includes seven heavens. For a discussion of the date of the *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*, see Michael A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1985), 149-150. For the seven heavens, see *ibid.*, 165-174. One can find later seven-heaven traditions in Jewish architecture as well, e.g. the seventh-heaven appears in the central panel of tripartite synagogue floor pavements, such as at Beth Alpha and Na'aran, Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements: Themes, Issues, and Trends*, 18-19.

²⁸² Stefan Beyerle, "The Imagined World of the Apocalypses," in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 381. In support of Beyerle's assertion, one notes that the seven heavens tradition is in the later, post-Christian Gnostic work, *The Apocryphon of John*. There, Sophia of the Epinoia gives birth to a thought without the help of a male consort. Her thought is imperfect and different from her in character, is apparently male in gender as she calls this thought by the pronoun him. She names this apparently male thought, Yaltabaoth. As the first archon, Yaltabaoth creates twelve aeons (later kings), and places seven kings "...each corresponding to the firmaments of heaven – over the seven heavens, and five over the depth of the abyss." Apparently in this scheme there are seven heavens and five levels of the abyss, see Wisse, "The

correct, then one can assume the literary device of seven heavens plays no role in influencing John.

However, later attempts at seven-heaven traditions are not the only concern regarding the number seven and the influence of non-canonical and non-biblical Jewish sources. In addition to heaven, the number seven modifies a vast array of nouns in this literature. This warrants at least a summary of some of the more significant instances.

Since John does not include a seven-heaven tradition in his document, the appearance of seven stars is an obvious referent to explore and thus, 1 Enoch 21:2-6, is an important background text.²⁸³ There, the author writes of the seven stars of heaven that the Lord bound and threw into an “unprepared place ... like great mountains burning with fire.”²⁸⁴ The number seven is significant, particularly as the text appears to indicate the stars are angels, but it does not say exactly why there are seven.²⁸⁵ Given John has seven stars that represent angels, the potential for influence is greater.

In addition to seven stars, 2 Esdras 7:30-31, outlines the destruction of the world in seven days, to return it to silence by removing all humans.²⁸⁶ The theme of seven days continues in 5:13, 5:20-21, 6:31-35, 9:23 and 9:27, as well as in 12:39-13:1. 2 Esdras also references seven

Apocryphon of John (II, 1, III, 1, IV, 1, and BG 8502, 2)," 110. Similarly, the tradition appears in the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul, likely a 2nd Century C.E. creation, so George W. Macrae and William R. Murdock, "The Apocalypse of Paul (V, 2)," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. Douglas M. Parrot and James M. Robinson (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 251. One can find it again in the Gnostic story of the origin of the world, Hans-Gebhard Bethge, "On the Origin of the World," in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James McConkey Robinson and Richard Smith, Coptic Gnostic Library Project (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 174.

²⁸³ Collins points out that 1 Enoch contains speculative material about Enoch, who in the biblical text of Genesis is the seventh man in the line of Adam, and that there may be associated meaning with his being the seventh man and God taking him to heaven, Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 44-45. The importance of the seventh generation appears again in 1 Enoch 93 (the Apocalypse of Weeks) where the text indicates they are the “chosen righteous,” and are given a seven-fold teaching on creation *ibid.*, 71.

²⁸⁴ *The Lexham English Septuagint*.

²⁸⁵ Bachmann, among others, dates the text to the third century B.C.E., Veronika Bachmann, "The Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1-36): An Anti-Mosaic, Non-Mosaic, or even Pro-Mosaic Writing?," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 11, (2011): 12.

²⁸⁶ *The Apocrypha: King James Version*. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995).

mighty mountains in 2:19 and 2 Esdras 7:62-70 may also outline a heptad of seven attributes of God: “merciful, gracious, patient, bountiful, abundant in compassion, giver and judge.”²⁸⁷

2.2.4.3 OT Background of the Number Seven

That the number seven in Revelation receives its primary influence from the OT is highly probable.²⁸⁸ In addition to the number seven, as one discusses above, Revelation also makes use of heptads, also deriving from the OT. Since John likely draws upon the OT use of seven, a summary of its uses and the uses of heptads is in order.²⁸⁹

The Greek ἑπτὰ appears 351 times in Rahlfs’ and Hanhart’s LXX,²⁹⁰ 377 in Rahlfs’ LXX,²⁹¹ and 320 times in Brenton’s version.²⁹² The Hebrew, שֶׁבַע, *seba*, appears 398 times in the BHS.²⁹³ Additionally, the BHS uses the word seventh, שְׁבִיעִי, *sebi*, 98 times²⁹⁴ and the LXX uses seventh, ἑβδόμη, *hebdome*, from *hebdomos*, 134 times. One does not explore the reasons for

²⁸⁷ As summarized by François Bovon, “Names and Numbers in Early Christianity,” *New Testament Studies* 47, no. 3 (July 2001): 270. He also refers to this section as 4 Ezra 7.132-140. Furthermore, Bovon points to the significance of the seven loaves and seven baskets leftover after the feeding of the 4,000 in Mark 8, although he oddly places the story in Luke.

²⁸⁸ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 58.

²⁸⁹ Heptads, explicit and implicit, are so common in the OT that some consider them a specific kind of literary form, Gaechter S.J., “Semitic Literary Forms in the Apocalypse and Their Import,” 547. Gordis affirms that the heptad is a specific literary form, and also believes that the number three and a half is indisputably connected to the number seven and may represent a “broken seven” and evil, Robert Gordis, “The Heptad as an Element of Biblical and Rabbinic Style,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 62, no. 1 (March 1943). Beckwith holds an opposing view to three and a half as broken seven, seeing it as exact, Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 252.

²⁹⁰ *Septuaginta: SESB Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

²⁹¹ Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*.

²⁹² Lancelot C.L. Brenton, *The Septuagint Version: Greek*. (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1851).

²⁹³ *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: With Westminster Hebrew Morphology*. Electronic ed. (Stuttgart; Glenside, PA: German Bible Society; Westminster Seminary, 1996).

²⁹⁴ 57 of the 98 occurrences are in the Torah, with four in Genesis, 17 in Exodus, 20 in Leviticus, 13 in Numbers, and only three in Deuteronomy. The highest concentration outside the Torah is in 1 & 2 Chronicles with 12.

the discrepancies of Greek and Hebrew use in this work,²⁹⁵ but the semantic density testifies to its influence in the text.

A recurrent assertion in biblical studies is that the number seven in the Old and New Testaments represents completion,²⁹⁶ derived from the account of the seven days of creation in Genesis 1-2. Most significantly, Genesis 2:1-2 repeats the use of, כָּלָה, *kalah*, meaning complete or finished, writing, “Thus the heavens and earth were finished...And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done.”²⁹⁷

Interestingly, Genesis 2:2-3 also repeats, שָׁבַת, *shabat*, rest, noting that on the seventh day God rested, but few discussions of the number seven move beyond the association of seven with completeness and consider the possibility of rest. This is a serious omission, given that it is the concept of rest, not completion, which undergirds the later OT tradition of the Sabbath.²⁹⁸

Sprinkle supports this assertion in a brief discussion on the number seven in the legal texts of Exodus, particularly chapters 20-23. He sees the pattern of God ceasing from work and

²⁹⁵ That said, one of the clearest reasons is omission, e.g. Rahlfs edition excludes Genesis 5:31, which the BHS contains. It reads, “Thus all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy-seven years; and he died.” Lamech’s age is a perfect coalescence of seven. Of interest is that the LXX of Tan and deSilva contains Genesis 5:31 but reads that Lamech lived 753 years, Randall Tan and David A. deSilva, “*The Lexham Greek-English Interlinear Septuagint*,” (Logos Bible Software, 2009).

²⁹⁶ E.g. John A. Davies, “Heptadic Verbal Patterns in the Solomon Narrative of 1 Kings 1-11,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 63, no. 1 (2012): 22. In his assertion that the number seven “conveys the idea of completeness,” Davies goes too far in citing Gordis’ work as evidence. Gordis never states what the number seven means, only that heptads are a biblical and rabbinic stylistic device.

²⁹⁷ Oddly, most authors who posit a meaning of completeness do not offer the linguistic evidence from Genesis 2:1-2 in support of their assertion. They often assume its meaning with no explanation, Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 253. Cole does reference Genesis 2:2 in Cole, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Elwell and Beitzel (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), s.v. “Numbers and Numerology.” Milgrom, in his excellent Leviticus commentary, discusses seven regularly in the context of purity and cleanness, but then concludes without evidence that seven means completeness, Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 1039.

²⁹⁸ Eichrodt includes an interesting discussion of the Sabbath, emphasizing rest and abstinence from work, and argues it is independent and disassociated with any notion of the lunar calendar or phases of the moon, with respect to the Babylonian calendar, Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*. vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), 132-133.

resting as undergirding laws beyond the Sabbath, such as the release of slaves in the seventh year in Exod. 21:2, and the command to let the land lie fallow in the seventh year in Exod. 23:11.²⁹⁹

Moreover, as Waltke notes, this seventh day is “the only day that God blessed and sanctified and the only day that has no evening to end it.”³⁰⁰ Waltke sees the seven days of creation, especially the Sabbath, as directly connected to Israel’s Exodus through the sea. He concludes that the Sabbath “commemorates both the liberation of the cosmos from lifeless chaos to ordered life and the liberation of Israel from Egyptian bondage to worship *I AM*.”³⁰¹ In this view, liberation, order, and worship correlate with rest and the number seven.

Beyond Genesis 2:2-3, the entire book of Genesis uses the number seven extensively, indicating another way in which Revelation forms a bookend with the first book.³⁰² Perhaps borrowing from its seminal seven-day creation narratives, Genesis includes many seven-day references.³⁰³ In fact, seven frequently modifies the two words “days” and “years” in the OT.

Genesis 8:10-12 indicates that Noah twice sent out a dove from the ark, waiting seven days in each instance, for a total of fourteen days.³⁰⁴ Genesis 31:22 records that Laban pursued

²⁹⁹ Joe M. Sprinkle, “Law and Narrative in Exodus 19-24,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 2 (June 2004): 245.

³⁰⁰ Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 187.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Genesis and Numbers have an equally dense number of references, followed by Leviticus and Exodus. Based on density, it appears the Torah is the source of the number seven for the rest of the OT.

³⁰³ A very helpful article categorizing the number seven as it relates to days in the OT is A. Colin Day, “Seven Days Elapsed,” in *Collins Thesaurus of the Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009).

³⁰⁴ Later Rabbinic tradition developed the idea of the seven Noahide laws, or religious duties, to which all people, including non-Jews were subject, e.g. Baba Qamma 4:3, Jacob Neusner, *Baba Qamma*. 22 vols., The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), 157-158. They are, according to Cohn-Sherbok, “...the prohibition of idolatry, blasphemy, bloodshed, sexual sins, theft, eating from a living animal, and the injunction to establish a legal system,” Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism and Other Faiths*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1994), 29. Cohn-Sherbok’s translation of eating from a living beast is more dynamic compared to Neusner’s translation of Sanhedrin 7:5, “...setting up courts of justice, idolatry, blasphemy, fornication, bloodshed, thievery, and cutting a limb from a living beast,” Neusner, *Sanhedrin*, 296. Lemler notes that this legislation applied to all non-Jews, writing, “Les sages du Talmud attribuent à la Torah l’établissement d’une législation applicable à tous les hommes non juifs ...”, David Lemler, “Noachisme et philosophie: Destin d'un thème talmudique de Maïmonide à Cohen en passant par Spinoza,” *Archives de Philosophie* 74, no. 4 (2011): 629.

Jacob seven days before overtaking him in Gilead. Joseph lamented the death of his father, Jacob, for seven days in Genesis 50:10.³⁰⁵

A suggestive passage, which authors on the number seven frequently overlook, begins in Genesis 7:2. There God tells Noah to choose seven pairs of clean animals and seven pairs of the birds of the air, to enter the ark. The reason for choosing these animals is that God would send rain on the land in seven days. Perhaps the number seven symbolizes cleanness, as it might in Leviticus.³⁰⁶

In a sort of parallel to the two seven-day waiting periods regarding Noah's sending of the doves, Jacob serves two seven-year periods to marry both Rachel and Leah in Genesis 29:21-35.³⁰⁷

In one of the more noteworthy stories of Genesis, chapter 41 chronicles two of Pharaoh's dreams, where the number seven figures prominently. In the first dream, in Genesis 41:1-4, Pharaoh sees seven sleek, fat cows that come out of the river Nile, and an additional seven cows, ugly and thin, which also arise from the Nile, and which eat the fat cows.

Lemler also credits the influence of d'Aimé Pallière, inspired by the Italian Jew Élie (Elijah) Benamozegh and his Kabbalism, for spreading Noachide law ideas in France, *ibid.*, 630.

³⁰⁵ Day notes all of these instances, Day, "Seven Days Elapsed."

³⁰⁶ For instances of uncleanness lasting seven days, at which point one became clean, see Joe M. Sprinkle, "The Rationale of the Laws of Clean and Unclean In the Old Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43, no. 4 (2000). Sprinkle lists seven reasons for the laws of impurity, ranging from least to most important. He believes they teach about (1) hygiene, (2) they cause disassociation with pagans and the demonic, (3) they teach ethical lessons (not to be murderous, destructive, and predatory like unclean animals), (4) they cause association of Yahweh with order and life rather than death and disorder (diseases and uncleanness are linked with death), (5) they separate sexual expressions from holiness (pagans associated sex with worship whereas sexual expression in Israel rendered one unclean, perhaps to prevent Israel from cultic prostitution), (6) they cause separation from the Gentiles (in the same way as number five, making this category a bit repetitive), (7) they teach the holiness of God as opposed to man's contamination (those who approach God must be clean and pure).

³⁰⁷ Day notes that in the Genesis 29 narrative of the marriages, one week separates the time Jacob serves for Leah and then begins serving for Rachel, although he calls it seven days, Day, "Seven Days Elapsed."

In the second dream, in Genesis 41:5-7, Pharaoh sees seven ears of grain, plump and good, growing on one stalk. Then he sees seven additional ears of grain, thin and blighted by the east wind. The thin ears swallow up the plump ears.

Pharaoh calls upon Joseph to interpret the dream and in each case, the seven cows and seven ears of grain represent seven years. Based on the definitions of figurative language above, the number seven in chapter 41 represents literal years, but the cows and ears of grain are submerged metaphors, meaning cows and grain are vehicles, and “years” is the tenor. In other words, one would read the metaphor as the seven years are seven cows and the seven years are seven ears of grain.

In each dream, fat, sleek, ugly, and thin serve as attributive metaphors, where sleek and fat represent good years with plenty of food, and thin and ugly represent years of famine. Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams is one of the rare instances where the number seven appears in an explicitly metaphorical text. However, why God sends seven years of plenty and seven years of famine remains a mystery.³⁰⁸

Beyond days and years, Genesis 21:28 records that Abraham gave Abimelech seven ewe lambs to serve as a witness that Abraham had dug a well of water near Gerar, where Abimelech was king. They call the place Beersheba. In this context, seven seems to indicate witness.

Farther along, in Genesis 33:3, Jacob bows down seven times as he approaches his brother Esau. It is a sign of reverence, perhaps repentance, although the text does not clearly indicate its meaning.

³⁰⁸ The text seems to indicate that not only are the dreams from God, but the events described in the dreams are from God as well. Green’s argument that the number seven in Mediterranean folklore adheres with prayers for rain, fertility, and wealth, based on these dreams in Genesis 41, is unconvincing, Yosef Green, “Who Knows Seven?,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (October-December 2013): 255.

Genesis uses implicit heptads as well.³⁰⁹ Waltke cites Cassuto, who notes the Hebrew text contains seven words in the opening sentence of Gen. 1:1, and that the expressions “living things,” and “it was good,” both appear seven times.³¹⁰ Wenham, following Walsh, believes the garden story in Gen. 2:4-3:24 contains seven scenes.³¹¹ Gordis sees seven clauses in God’s blessing of Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3, and in Isaac’s blessing of Jacob beginning in Gen. 27:28.³¹²

These examples in Genesis demonstrate the importance of the number seven from the very beginning of biblical revelation and that Genesis is not just seminal in its content, but in its stylistic devices.

While an exhaustive overview of the number seven in the OT is not possible here, some additional examples within the Pentateuch further demonstrate its biblical significance.

The use of the number seven in the remainder of the Torah is critical to seeing its symbolic nature as well. Moses³¹³ rescues the seven daughters of Midian in Ex. 2:16 and God struck the Nile, turning it to blood for seven days in Ex. 7:25. The feast of unleavened bread, commemorating Passover, lasted seven days as in Ex. 12:15, 23:15, and 34:18. In the offering of the firstborn in Ex. 22:30, sheep and oxen could remain with their mothers for seven days, and

³⁰⁹ Implicit heptads are difficult to identify with certainty, leaving the possibility open to find them everywhere and impose them where a series of seven may be random. However, given the examples that appear as clear implicit heptads, and the frequency of heptads in the OT, one believes implicit heptads intend structural devices overlooked by most modern audiences.

³¹⁰ Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 186. Wenham goes further, seeing multiples of seven in the creation account, such as “God” mentioned 35 times, “earth” 21 times, and “heaven” 21 times, Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 6.

³¹¹ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 50; Jerome T. Walsh, “Genesis 2:4b-3:24: A Synchronic Approach,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96, no. 2 (June 1977). Walsh divides the scenes into Gen. 2:4b-17, 2:18-25, 3:1-5, 3:6-8, 3:9-13, 3:14-19, 3:22-24.

³¹² Gordis, “The Heptad as an Element of Biblical and Rabbinic Style,” 19. He sees other implicit heptads in Amos 3:3-7, where one finds seven questions, and in Amos 4:6-13 where “the prophet enumerates a series of calamities” totaling seven. Gordis also presents a helpful introduction to heptads in rabbinic literature.

³¹³ Although this work does not address the Talmudic use of seven in detail, one wonders about the significance of the number seven surrounding the birth and death of Moses, where one finds the Tannaim believed Moses was born on the seventh of Adar and died on the seventh of Adar. For more discussion, see Jacob Neusner, *The Reader's Guide to the Talmud*. (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2001), 237.

on the eighth day, Israel was to give it to the Lord.³¹⁴ The Lord spoke to Moses from the cloud on the seventh day in Ex. 24:16³¹⁵

The lampstand of the tabernacle had seven branches in Ex. 25:37 and 37:23. Ex. 29:30 writes that when one of Aaron's sons wore the holy garments to minister in Aaron's stead, he did so for seven days. In Ex. 29:35-38, the ordination of Aaron and his sons lasted seven days, during which they made atonement each day.³¹⁶

A summary of the symbolic nature of "seven" in Exodus associates it with Passover, unleavened bread, atonement, and ordination.

In Leviticus, the emphasis on the number seven centers on the priestly service of sprinkling liquids seven times in front of the veil in the tent of meeting, such as blood, oil, or mixtures of blood and water.³¹⁷ Similarly, the priest sprinkles a leper seven times as a sign of cleanness, or cultic purity.³¹⁸ Nine times Leviticus records that the priest is to sprinkle someone or something, presumably to make them clean.³¹⁹

³¹⁴ Neusner uses a Talmudic discussion of this Exodus passage to further his argument of the taxonomic use of language in the Talmud, demonstrating how it makes use of Aramaic, Mishnaic Hebrew, and Middle Hebrew, *ibid.*, 38-39.

³¹⁵ Segal discusses Philo's interpretation of this passage, that Moses changed from an earthly man to a heavenly man, in Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism*, 71. Eichrodt notes the close connection between the *kābōd* (glory or presence of God) and the storm-cloud, from which God spoke to Moses on the seventh day, Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*. vol. 2 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), 19.

³¹⁶ Lev. 8:33-35 contain a similar account of atonement for ordination. Milgrom uses the category of a rite of passage to describe these seven days and compares them to the first seven days of a child's life in Gen. 17:12, the seven days of marriage in Gen. 29:27, and the seven days of mourning in Gen. 50:10, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 538.

³¹⁷ Milgrom cites Ibn Ezra's recognition of the number seven in the cultic calendar, based on Num. 23:1, pointing to the seventh day (Sabbath), seventh week (Pentecost), seventh month (Tishri), seventh year (Sabbath for land, remission of debts), seven burnt-offering lambs, seven sprinklings, seven bulls, seven rams, and seven altars, but Milgrom offers no conclusion as to its meaning, *ibid.*, 234.

³¹⁸ Priestly ordination, as in Exodus, is in Lev. 8:33-35, where the Lord ordains the priest for seven days and the priest must serve at the door of the tent of meeting for seven days. Failure to remain at the doorway of the tent for seven days resulted in the death of the priest.

³¹⁹ Leviticus 4:6, 4:17, 8:11, 14:7, 14:16, 14:27, 14:51, 16:14, and 16:19.

Leviticus not only records that priests sprinkled objects or individuals seven times for cleanness, but also that a period of seven days must pass before an unclean individual may be clean. Lev. 12:2 indicates that a woman is unclean for seven days after the birth of a male child, and that she should circumcise the child on the eighth day, the first day of her purity.³²⁰ In Lev. 14:7-8, although the priest sprinkles the healed leper seven times, the same leper must remain outside his tent for seven days as well.³²¹

Continuing the theme of cleanness, if a leprous mark appears on the walls of a house, Lev. 14:58 prescribes that the priest shall quarantine the house for seven days.³²² Lev. 15:19 records that a menstruating woman is unclean for seven days and any man who engages in sexual relations with her during menstruation is unclean for seven days.

Leviticus, like other books, contains implicit heptads as well. For instance, as Milgrom notes, Lev. 21:6-8, uses the root, קדש, qdš, holy, seven times to describe the nature of the priests, “They shall be holy to their God.”³²³ It may be that Lev. 22:17-30 is also an implicit heptad. There one finds that offerings of sheep and cattle must be without blemish for God to accept them. The root רצה, ršh, acceptable, occurs seven times in this brief pericope.³²⁴ Additionally,

³²⁰ Milgrom argues the child is not impure, but the mother, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 744.

³²¹ Jastrow notes that Greek manuscripts use “house” instead of tent, a part of a later effort to modernize the application, broadly understood as separation from the tainted dwelling. The nature of the dwelling is secondary, Morris Jastrow, “The So-called ‘Leprosy’ Laws: An Analysis of Leviticus, Chapters 13 and 14,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 4, (1913-1914): 375.

³²² In the same context of leprosy, Lev. 13:58 commands that one wash a leprous garment. Although the number seven does not appear, Milgrom notes that later rabbis commanded that one wash the garment in a detergent with seven ingredients, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 815. Lev. 13:5, 21 command seven days quarantine as well.

³²³ Ibid., 730.

³²⁴ Ibid., 149.

Milgrom points out that the phrase, “as the Lord commanded him,” appears seven times in Lev. 8 and forms the “scaffolding” of the chapter’s sections.³²⁵

Num. 19 is a famous chapter amongst the rabbis for its implicit heptads, at least according to Milgrom.³²⁶ He cites *Pesiqta deRab Kahana*, *pisqa* four, where the chapter apparently focuses on seven different subjects, each mentioned seven times in Num. 19.³²⁷

Concerning the monarchical period, Davies observes the many uses of seven in the narrative of 1 Kgs. 1-11,³²⁸ that it took Solomon seven years to build the house of the Lord (temple) in Jerusalem,³²⁹ that Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant in the temple in the seventh month,³³⁰ and that the festival to commemorate the temple lasted seven days.³³¹ In 1 Kgs. 18:44, Elijah sends a servant to see if any rain clouds are arising over the sea, bringing an end to the long draught in Israel. Seeing none, the servant returns and Elijah sends him seven additional times, and on the seventh, the servant sees a rain cloud.

2 Kgs. 5:10 famously records Elisha’s command to Naaman to wash himself seven times in the Jordan River for his leprosy to abate. 2 Chronicles 29:21 uses a dense series of sevens to describe Hezekiah’s purification offering, seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven he-goats.³³²

³²⁵ Lev. 8:4, 9, 13, 17, 21, 29, 36. Milgrom also contends that the same phrase appears seven times in Exod. 39:1-31, and Exod. 40:17-38, *ibid.*, 499. Milgrom, in discussing Lev. 8 and without noting any potential significance, points out that the *Urim* and *Thummim* appear together only seven times in scripture in Exod. 28:30, Lev. 8:8, Num. 27:21, Deut. 33:8, 1 Sam. 28:6, Ezra 2:63, Neh. 7:65, *ibid.*, 507.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1039.

³²⁷ For a general introduction to *Pesiqta deRab Kahana*, see Jacob Neusner, “*Pesiqta deRab Kahana*,” in *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

³²⁸ Davies, “Heptadic Verbal Patterns in the Solomon Narrative of 1 Kings 1-11.”

³²⁹ 1 Kgs. 6:38.

³³⁰ 1 Kgs. 8:2.

³³¹ 1 Kgs. 8:65.

³³² Milgrom offers an unlikely scenario for the use of four series of sevens in 2 Chron. 29:21, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 285.

One passage that receives significant attention with respect to the number seven and the book of Revelation is Daniel 9:24-25. There Gabriel gives Daniel a vision in which there will be seventy weeks for Daniel's people and the holy city to finish transgression, put an end to sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to anoint a most holy place. The decree also states there will be seven weeks between the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of an anointed prince. Many people read this text and use it as a means of predicting a millennial kingdom or the coming of the Lord, or associate the seven weeks and seventy weeks with Revelation.³³³ There is not room here to discuss this passage fully, but one concludes it is not relevant for the number seven as a symbol in this work.

Since one is discussing Daniel, a possible implicit heptad occurs surrounding the phrase, "I, Daniel," and may be a clue to the structure of the sections in which they appear. The phrase is in Daniel 7:15, 8:15, 8:27, 9:2, 10:2, 10:7, and 12:5.³³⁴

Unfortunately, for many students of John's Apocalypse, the number seven in the book of Daniel is as far as their study goes. As one shows here, the number has a rich and varied history, particularly in the OT, long before the NT era.

2.2.4.4 *NT Background of the Number Seven*

As with the OT, both the number seven and explicit and implicit heptads are widespread in the NT. The number seven, ἑπτὰ, appears 88 times in the New Testament, while the number of implicit heptads remains uncounted and a complete study appears to be a lacuna in NT studies. The 88 references are only in six books, with Revelation accounting for 55, or 63%.³³⁵ Only

³³³ E.g. Harry A. Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*. 2nd ed. (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953), 155-171.

³³⁴ Aune notices that the phrase appears seven times, but does not label it an implicit heptad. He also notes that the phrase "has a formal, authoritative force," Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 75.

³³⁵ As they appear in Aland, Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini, and Metzger, eds., *The Greek New Testament*.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews and Revelation use the number seven, and Hebrews only once at that.

One proceeds then with a brief examination of heptads, explicit and implicit, in the NT, which may influence the symbolic meaning of the number seven in the book of Revelation.

Just as with the OT, explicit heptads are commonplace in the NT and Matthew, as the first book, sets the tone. Nine times Matthew uses the number seven and in each narrative instance, it appears he intends something special by it, although what is difficult to determine.

Matthew 12:45 has an evil spirit, after it has gone out of a person, returning later with seven other spirits, more evil than it is.³³⁶ Matthew 15:34-37 tells the story of Jesus feeding 4,000 men, not counting women and children, and references seven three times. He fed them with seven loaves of bread and two fish.³³⁷ The disciples later picked up seven basketfuls of leftovers.³³⁸

One of Matthew's prominent uses is 18:22 where Peter asks Jesus how many times he must forgive his brother, offering up to seven times.³³⁹ Jesus replies "Not seven times, but I tell you seventy-seven times."³⁴⁰

The Sadducees use the number seven three times in Matthew 22:25-28. The text says they deny the resurrection of dead and so they attempt to trap Jesus with a story of a woman married to seven brothers. All of them, down to the seventh brother, die childless, leaving the women alone. They proceed to ask Jesus "Whose wife of the seven will she be?" An obviously fabricated story, the Sadducees still chose seven brothers over another number.

³³⁶ "More evil," is the translation of the NRSV.

³³⁷ Mark 8:5,6,8, and 20 all use the number seven in the same story.

³³⁸ Jesus recounts this story in Matt. 16:10 speaking of the seven loaves.

³³⁹ In this instance both *ἑπτὰ*, seven, and *ἑπτὰκις*, seven times, appear. *ἑπτὰκις* only occurs four times in the NT, all in the context of forgiving one's brother. It appears in Matthew 18:21 and 22, and two times in Luke 17:4.

³⁴⁰ Mark 12:20,22, and 23, use seven three times in Mark's version of the same story.

Mark only has one reference to the number seven that Matthew does not also have. It occurs in Mark 16:9, where Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection. The story says Jesus drove seven demons from her. Incidentally, this story, and the one in Mathew above about seven evil spirits, removes any doubt that the number seven is about purity or holiness as it appears in some OT contexts.

Outside of Revelation, the most prominent author employing the number seven is Luke. In Luke-Acts, one can find fourteen uses of the number seven, or 16% of the total in the NT. However, only one appearance in the Gospel is unique, which is Luke 2:36, and it is not a figurative use of the number seven.³⁴¹ There, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, was married for seven years before her husband died and she lived 84 years alone. She was looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem and thanked God upon seeing the boy Jesus in the temple when he and his mother came for purification rites.

The number seven, as an explicit heptad, is relatively prominent in the book of Acts as well. In Acts 6:3, the apostles instruct the church to choose seven young men from among them to serve the widows in need. Paul's speech in Acts 13:19, in the synagogue in Antioch, reminds the hearers that God destroyed seven nations before the people of Israel in the land of Canaan and gave the land to Israel as an inheritance. In one of the more fascinating stories of Acts, 19:14 records that seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva are attempting to exorcise demons in the name of Jesus, "whom Paul proclaims." In one instance, an evil spirit attacks them, leaving them to flee naked from the house. Finally, it appears a conventional pattern in

³⁴¹ Luke 8:2 tells of Mary Magdalene from whom Jesus drove seven spirits. Luke 11:26 is the story of the seven evil spirits returning. Luke 20:29-33 three times uses the number seven for the woman with seven husbands. These stories are in Matthew or Mark.

Acts, as in 20:6, 21:4, 28:14, that upon arriving in certain locations for the preaching of the gospel, Paul stays with the brothers in that location for seven days.³⁴²

The only reference in Hebrews is 11:30, where the writer recounts the story of Jericho and the people of Israel walking around it for seven days.

Implicit heptads also appear regularly in the NT. In Matthew for instance, Parsons notes the prayer in chapter 6 includes seven petitions³⁴³ and the doxology in Romans 11:33-36 contains seven affirmations.³⁴⁴ Whitlark and Parsons also argue that the saying of Jesus from the cross in Luke 23:34a is a late addition in order that “there be seven sayings and not six that Jesus spoke from the cross.”³⁴⁵

The use of implicit heptads in the Gospel of John as symbolic is common knowledge, although authors do not use this designation. For instance, Beasley-Murray, among others, notes the importance of the seven “I am” sayings of John’s gospel.³⁴⁶ Other potential implicit heptads occur in the structure of John’s narrative. Beasley-Murray demonstrates that John 9 divides into seven distinct sections,³⁴⁷ and Jesus’ arrest narratives in John 18:1-19:42 divide into three sections of seven paragraphs each, which Beasley-Murray speculates may or may not relate to John’s heptads in Revelation.³⁴⁸

³⁴² Acts 21:17-36 tells the story of Paul’s return to Jerusalem where he stayed at least seven days, since in 21:26-27 he enters seven days of purification.

³⁴³ Mikeal C. Parsons, “Exegesis ‘By the Numbers’: Numerology and the New Testament,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 35, (2008): 27. Gordis notes the Lord’s Prayer in Matt. 6 as well, but he forces efforts to find a heptad in the so-called beatitudes of Matt. 5, Gordis, “The Heptad as an Element of Biblical and Rabbinic Style,” 25. Matthew 23 also famously contains the seven woe oracles of Jesus against the scribes and Pharisees.

³⁴⁴ Parsons, “Exegesis ‘By the Numbers’: Numerology and the New Testament,” 27.

³⁴⁵ Jason A. Whitlark and Mikeal C. Parsons, “The ‘Seven’ Last Words: A Numerical Motivation for the Insertion of Luke 23:34a,” *New Testament Studies* 52, no. 2 (April 2006): 188.

³⁴⁶ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 89-90. See also János Bolyki, “Christology in the Gospel of John: A New Approach,” in *Testimony and Interpretation: Early Christology in Its Judeo-Hellenistic Milieu: Studies in Honor of Peter Pokorný*, ed. Jiří Mrázek and Jan Roskovec (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 200; Otniel L. Vereş, “A Study of the ‘I Am’ Phrases in John’s Gospel,” *Perichoresis* 6, no. 1 (2008): 115.

³⁴⁷ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 152.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 321.

A more difficult implicit heptad, indeed, whether John intends it is unknown,³⁴⁹ is the appearance of Jesus to seven disciples in John 21:1,2, which records Jesus appeared to Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin, Nathanael of Cana, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.³⁵⁰

Morgan notes an important potential Pauline heptad, though he does not call it such or discuss any possible metaphorical meaning. He argues the phrases *πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, *πίστεως Ἰησοῦ*, *πίστεως Χριστοῦ*, or other similar constructions appear seven times in the Pauline corpus, although he does not indicate to which passages he refers.³⁵¹ English translators render the above phrases, “faith of Jesus Christ” or “faith in Jesus Christ” (faith of Jesus, faith of Christ, etc.) depending on one’s theological convictions.

One potentially significant implicit heptad in Revelation is the use *ὑπομονή*, patience or patient endurance. It appears in Rev. 1:9, 2:2, 2:3, 2:19, 3:10, 13:10, and 14:12. Aune is aware of the verb occurring seven times and includes substantial discussion of its potential significance in Revelation, but does not label it an implicit heptad.³⁵² Bauckham, in speculating on the significance of major Christological titles in Revelation, notes that the word *ἔρχομαι*, coming, is on the lips of Jesus seven times, “... as a promise or threat of his parousia.”³⁵³

As an explicit NT heptad outside of Revelation, seven modifies spirits, loaves, basketfuls, days, brothers, years, young men, nations, and sons. In other words, it can modify anything an author chooses because it is a special number.

³⁴⁹ One could understand the passage as a simple statement of historical fact. There were seven disciples present and there is no symbolic significance.

³⁵⁰ Kistemaker calls this breakfast with seven disciples, Kistemaker, *Acts*, 395.

³⁵¹ Robert Morgan, “New Testament,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, ed. J.W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 39. Possibly, he refers to Rom. 3:22, Rom. 3:26, Gal. 2:16(2), Gal. 3:14, and Phil. 3:9. Rom. 1:17 is a major passage in the objective/subjective faith in or faith of Christ debate in Pauline circles. It makes no mention of Jesus or Christ in such a construction however. For more on this issue, read Douglas A. Campbell, “The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Romans and Galatians,” in *Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting* (San Diego, CA: 2007).

³⁵² Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 76.

³⁵³ Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, 34.

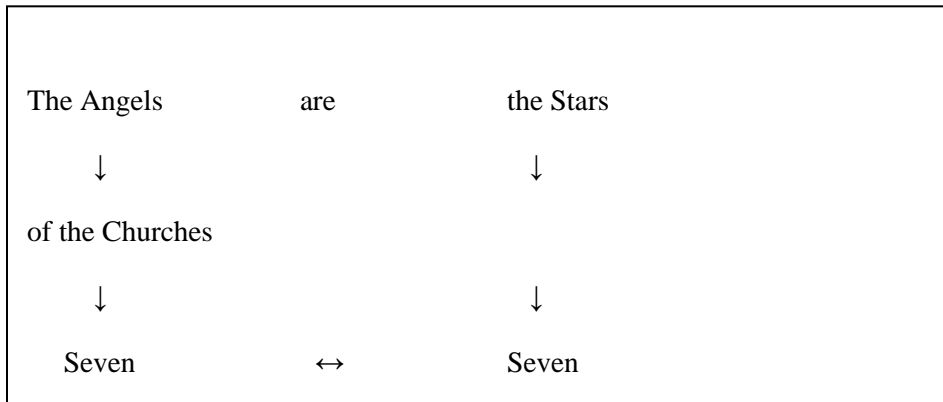
To conclude about the number seven, the issue in the two metaphors that include the number seven is not just the relationship of the stars and angels and lampstands and churches, but also John's use of the number seven. Its inclusion presents more complexity. This is not to say that identifying the meaning of the metaphor is simple apart from the number seven, but the number seven does add difficulty.

John's epistolary introduction in 1:4 indicates the recipients of the apocalyptic letter to be seven churches. There is nothing inherently metaphorical or symbolic on the surface of this introduction, particularly if taken out of its co-text. John then proceeds to include brief epistles to seven churches in chapters 2-3. In the micro co-text, it is the angels and the churches that are primarily and obviously metaphorical, not necessarily the number seven.

Therefore, it appears the number seven is not metaphorical, as are the stars and angels, but is likely a symbol. Rather than assume seven is completeness, it is best to understand the number seven as a multivalent symbol that stands for numerous things, such as completeness, purification, Sabbath, and holiness. It is best not to force a single meaning on a multivalent symbol whose co-text does not make it clear its value.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴ Yarbrow Collins, in commenting on Hehn's examples of seven in Babylonian literature, writes, "All they show is that seven was a special number. They do not reveal the reason for its special role." She then concludes, "The same must be said about the corresponding Biblical passages," Yarbrow Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*, 125.

Schematically, one may imagine the metaphor to appear as follows:



In this way, the basic metaphor is the angels are the stars, and the genitive “of the seven churches,” and the indeclinable number “seven” serve as limiting functions to each substantive.³⁵⁵ Thus, John is clear in distinguishing these angels from other angels, most likely the other angels within his apocalypse. One wonders if this is because these seven angels are not the same as the seven angels who blow the seven trumpets or pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath. That these angels are also stars “of” the seven churches may be to differentiate these stars from the other stars, like those cast down to earth by the dragon’s tail in Rev. 12:4. They are only the seven that metaphorically represent the angels.

It is not just the complexity of the syntax that makes this metaphor distinct from 1:8; it is that John introduces the seven stars in 1:16 where the one like the Son of Man is holding seven stars in his right hand. Due to this preliminary description of the stars and the disclosure four verses later that the stars are not literal, 1:20 is also an example of a submerged metaphor.

³⁵⁵ Wallace notes that the basic function of the genitive, as well as the accusative, is that it expresses, “some kind of limitation,” and that the “genitive limits as to kind,” Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 76.

With the introduction of this metaphor, John uses the first of several such metaphors, thus not only presenting his themes in the first chapter, but hints of his communicative strategy.³⁵⁶

Since the angels of the churches are the stars is a metaphor,³⁵⁷ it must work by way of analogy; A is to B, as C is to D. In this way, one must understand that the angels are to the churches as the stars are to something else. In fact, it is in the process of analogy where the genitive descriptor is most helpful. It assists in determining the components in the analogous relationship. In this case, it specifically defines the A is to B of the tenor. All that is left is to determine the nature of the C is to D regarding the relationship of stars.

2.2.5 *Conclusion to the Stars Metaphor*

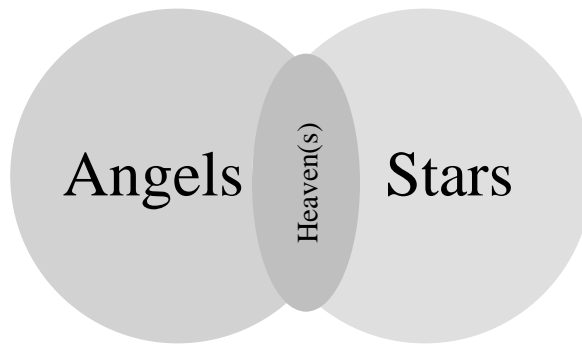
When considering all the uses and understanding of stars and angels noted above, one believes here the analogy is to the night sky or the heavens and to light.³⁵⁸ Since angels and stars have as associated common places heaven or the sky and light, the metaphor interacts at these levels, as the simple figure below illustrates.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ For instance, in 13:11, John describes a beast from the earth who has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon, and performs great signs, even calling down fire from heaven. This description is reminiscent of Moses in Exodus 9:23, and Elijah in 1 Kgs. 18:38, 2 Kgs. 1:10, 12, 14. It is not surprising then that John later refers to this beast as the false prophet in Revelation 16:13 and even more explicitly in 19:20, revealing it to be a submerged metaphor.

³⁵⁷ The words, "of the churches," do not qualify as genitive metaphors, as one defines earlier, because they are not part of the vehicle, but rather the tenor. In the examples of genitive metaphors above, the author attaches the genitive to the vehicle, e.g. "I am the bread of life."

³⁵⁸ While one can certainly assail the conclusion here, it fits within the sphere of associated common places as well. In biblical literature, both stars and angels are heavenly.

³⁵⁹ A similar, albeit more complex chart of associated commonplaces is Emily Ayoob, "Black & Donaldson on Metaphor," *Macalester Journal of Philosophy* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 57. In that chart, all the characteristics of each constituent are in the outer rings with the center ring serving as the area of overlap between the characteristics. The problem with this type of analysis is that the commonplaces in the outer rings are those of which one can think, making the process rather arbitrary. In a contextualized metaphorical analysis, one finds these places within the co-text and context of the utterance.



The angels are to the churches as the stars are to the heavens, specifically the perception of the heavens from an earthly perspective, that they are only visible because of their light.³⁶⁰

One believes this best represents the OT perspective of stars from the very beginning in Genesis: they are those bodies that give light to the night sky. Therefore, as the stars bring light to the night sky, the angels bring light to the church.

Naturally, one must understand light in this context figuratively, such as light stands for guides, messages, etc. This is because of the role of the angels in the context of Rev. 1-3; they act as mediators of messages between Jesus and the churches.

Another consideration here is navigation, although this is purely speculative. Davis argues that navigators in the Aegean Sea used the stars as early as the Bronze Age when mariners explored “open-sea voyages of many days’ duration.”³⁶¹ Perhaps this idea of a guide is one way in which authors associate angels and stars, although one believes this unlikely.³⁶²

³⁶⁰ Stuckenbruck writes of the close association between angels and the heavens, albeit in the context of idolatry. He quotes Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael 2.243, where the Rabbi interprets the prohibition against idolatry in Exod. 20:4, fashioning something in the form of anything in the heaven above, as applying to angels, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*. ed. Martin Hengel and Otfried Hofius, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), 58.

³⁶¹ Danny Lee Davis, “Navigation in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean” (M.A. thesis, Texas A&M University, May 2001), 146.

³⁶² Although Davis points out that ancient seals, frescos, graffiti, and other art, tend to marry ships with stars in the ANE, *ibid.*, 147-149. In the same place, Davis also discusses the idea of the “guide-star” in Cycladic and Minoan art. It is difficult to conclude much of anything regarding stars and navigation in the ANE. Wachsmann points out that navigational techniques were closely guarded secrets, not written down, and often died with skilled navigators, Shelley Wachsmann, “Navigation,” in *Seagoing Ships & Seamanship in the Bronze Age Levant* (College Station, TX; London: Texas A&M University Press; Chatham Publishing, 1998), 299. It is interesting, as Van Dijk points

This view is consistent with its use of the submerged metaphors of the lampstands are the churches. Lampstands need light. This is how John connects these two metaphors, not to mention to the many similes in 1:12ff, into a complex metaphor.³⁶³ Furthermore, as the figure who walks among the lampstands is heavenly throughout the book of Revelation, it makes sense that the metaphor would interact at this level.

Van der Watt notes that complex metaphors have “different grades of complexity,” and that semantic cohesion is what keeps groups of metaphors together.³⁶⁴ Such is the case with 1:20, where John weaves together two submerged metaphors, not to mention other metaphors and similes in 1:12-20.³⁶⁵

When one combines the metaphors with all the similes, they create a larger temple image, where a high priestly figure serves the sanctuary. Van der Watt argues that this is one of the functions of complex metaphors, to create larger images. He calls this process of reading metaphors together as a unit the “creation of a metaphorical network.”³⁶⁶ By this definition, Rev. 1:12-20 is surely a metaphorical network.

out, that Aratus (3rd Century B.C.E.) wrote that Sidonian seaman used Ursa Minor as a guide, believing it helped to “steer [sic] the straightest course,” Evert Van Dijk, “Socio-Economic Relations Between the Ancient Near East and East Africa During the Old Testament Era” (M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, February 2006), 59. Interesting in that Ursa Minor has seven points visible to the naked eye. Since angels are unique in Judaism and Christianity, it is unsurprising that the literature does not associate ships with angels or angels with stars.

³⁶³ Miller states metaphors are made complex by “incorporating additional meanings or compound by combining with succeeding metaphors ...,” Miller, *The Net of Hephaestus: A Study of Modern Criticism and Metaphysical Metaphor*, 129.

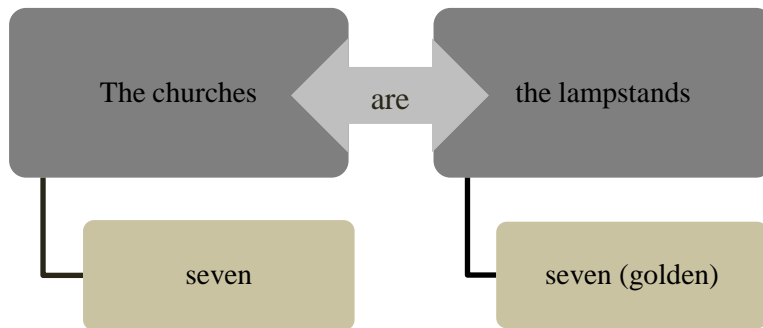
³⁶⁴ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 123.

³⁶⁵ E.g. the son of man figure “held” seven stars in his right hand, is a verbal metaphor. Even if one understands that the stars are figurative, the figure still does not hold seven angels in his hand.

³⁶⁶ Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 123.

2.3 Revelation 1:20 – The Seven Lampstands are the Seven Churches

Although 1:20 possesses two very similar metaphors, they are not identical. In this second submerged metaphor, the seven lampstands are the vehicle and the seven churches are the tenor. The sentence has the same reversed structure of the seven stars are the angels of the churches. However, in this case, there is no genitive descriptor, but rather two ordinals carefully identifying the number of lampstands and the number of churches. Additionally, unlike the previous submerged metaphor, this metaphor contains the attributive descriptor of lampstands as golden, χρυσᾶς. One may scheme the sentence in this way:



2.3.1 Overview of Interpretations of the Seven Golden Lampstands are the Seven Churches

As with the angels and stars above, Smalley writes that the lampstands are symbolic of the churches and comes from the seven-branched lampstand in Zechariah 4:2-11.³⁶⁷ He writes that Zechariah's lampstand represents the people of God in the OT and John's seven individual

³⁶⁷ Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*, 53. Lowery, in his, "Appendix B: A Key to Select Symbols in Revelation," lists the lampstands as a symbol without explaining its meaning. In fact, most of his symbols are actually metaphorical vehicles, Lowery, *Revelation's Rhapsody: Listening to the Lyrics of the Lamb*, 198-203.

lampstands represent the “Johannine circle in its totality and the reality of the Christian community as a whole.”³⁶⁸

However, Smalley, as above, does not use a robust definition, or any definition, of symbol here, nor does he recognize the metaphor. His contention for symbol again fails Van der Watt’s, Abram’s, and Fadaee’s understanding of symbol as representing something other than itself, as not acting as a vehicle in a metaphor, and not being a part of a comparison.³⁶⁹ If one were to restate Smalley in metaphorical terms it would be, “the seven churches, which are the seven lampstands, are the entire Christian community.” Lampstands would be a vehicle in one comparison and the tenor in the other.

Like “the angels of the seven churches are the seven stars,” commentators do not separate the metaphorical elements from the symbolic and thus confuse or conflate the two as identical. In nearly every instance, this confusion lies with how to interpret the vehicle in the metaphor as interpreters most commonly identify it as symbolic. To be fair, if one uses Coloe’s definition of symbol above, that it is merely the vehicle of a metaphor, many of these commentators are correct in identifying the symbols. Nevertheless, Coloe is rare in this assertion, although not as rare as those who include a definition of metaphor or symbol in their works rather than just assuming a meaning.

Boxall does not use any language with respect to symbols or metaphors. He regularly refers to Revelation 1:12-20 as a vision and when writing of the lampstands, says that 1:20 uncovers the mystery or secret of the lampstands.³⁷⁰ He sees in the lampstands an association

³⁶⁸ Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*, 53.

³⁶⁹ To clarify, Van der Watt defines symbol as representing something other than itself, Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 1. Fadaee argues that a symbol cannot be a part of a comparison, Fadaee, "Symbols, Metaphors and Similes in Literature: A Case Study of 'Animal Farm'," 20-21. Abram implies that symbol cannot be a vehicle in a metaphor or simile in Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* s.v. "Symbol." Seventh ed., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999), 312.

³⁷⁰ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 44.

with the golden lampstand of Exodus 25:31-40 and 37:17, as well as Zech. 4:2. Since John envisions seven lampstands instead of one, Boxall believes that Num. 8:2 clarifies the situation, as even Exodus 25 is a bit ambiguous. There one reads that there are seven lights on the lampstand. In the case of Revelation, there would be seven lampstands, each having seven prongs and each seven-pronged *menorah* has one light.³⁷¹

Easley sees the entirety of 1:12-16 as symbol and declares that the meaning of the symbols is not difficult.³⁷² His position is the same as Smalley's and Boxall's, as he sees these lampstands associated with the lampstand of Ex. 25:36-40 and Zech. 4:2. He too, as with Smalley, sees the seven lampstands as standing for "God's new people," as well.³⁷³ This last statement is consistent among commentators, that the church has replaced Israel as the people of God.³⁷⁴

Easley also believes that since Jesus is among the lampstands, this means that Jesus is "present with and caring for his people."³⁷⁵ Other than his conclusion, he offers no recognition that he is intentionally cognizant in his interpreting the words ἐν μέσῳ, in the midst, as figurative, in either a simile, metaphor, or symbol, and standing for "being present with and caring."

Easley's interpretation is quite curious in that while he labels many parts of 1:12-20 as symbolic, he attempts to determine the meaning of the lampstands via analogy, the process by which simile and metaphor work, but not symbol. Again, without giving any conscious indication that he is using the analogy of A is to B as C is to D, he concludes, "Just as

³⁷¹ Ibid., 41.

³⁷² Easley, *Revelation*, 18.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 24.

³⁷⁵ Easley, *Revelation*, 18.

lampstands bring physical light to the darkness, so Christ's churches bring moral light to a wicked world."³⁷⁶

Osborne offers one of the most complete descriptions of the lampstands. He attempts a historical reconstruction of the lampstand, probably from archaeological evidence, not as a candleholder, as people often picture, but rather "a stand on which lamps were set."³⁷⁷ He continues to describe these lamps as possessing a "single hole through which the wick protruded."³⁷⁸

Osborne believes that Zech. 4:2, and 4:10 are the critical OT texts for the background to the lampstands here in Rev. 1:12-20. Zechariah 4:2 records a golden lampstand with seven lamps. 4:10 only writes of the word seven, saying, and "these seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth." Osborne believes the seven in Zech. 4:10 refers to the seven lamps.³⁷⁹ However, in seeing the verses in Zechariah as critical to Revelation, Osborne does not demonstrate in any way how the seven lamps of Zechariah, as the eyes of the Lord, do or do not play a role in interpreting the seven lampstands of Rev. 1:12-20.

Osborne briefly notes that Ex. 25:31-40 also plays a role, but also sees a connection with 1 Kgs. 7:48-49 and the ten lamps placed around the altar of incense. He wonders if the ten lampstands, with five on each side of the altar, indicates completeness, but does not continue his thoughts on how this completeness may affect John's metaphor.

Finally, Osborne continues his amalgamation of meaning by inserting the possibility that "the churches are depicted as shining lights for God in the midst of a hostile world."³⁸⁰ He then

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Osborne, *Revelation*, 86.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 86.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 87.

sees the idea of shining lights as tied to witness and in doing so unwittingly introduces another metaphor: witnesses are shining lights. He justifies this based on the seven lampstands that connects to the two lampstands of Rev. 11:3-4 where one can take John's words as a metaphor; the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.³⁸¹

While Osborne may not be wrong in some of his conclusions, he does little to explain how he reaches them. This is significant considering the potential for numbers to act as symbols in Revelation. Since one has previously argued that metaphors, similes, literary symbols, and other forms of figurative language, do not necessarily maintain the same meaning from one context to another or one context to another, the difference in the number of lamps between chapter one and chapter eleven is notable. The burden seems to lie in demonstrating how these two numbers, probably symbols, stand for the same things.

As with Osborne, Poucouta, sees the lampstands as representative of the church's mission of light for the world, connecting the two lampstands and two olive trees in Rev. 11:3-4 to Rev. 1:12-20 as well.³⁸² He also asserts, following Prigent, that because the Church represents light via the lampstands and that Christ is walking among the lampstands, that this is the Church inhabited by Christ and not abandoned amid a hostile world.³⁸³

Poucouta's evaluation, consciously or subconsciously, recognizes that Rev. 1:20, while giving a submerged metaphorical structure, must also account for the focus and frame of 1:12-16

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Poucouta summarizes by writing, "Grâce à la double symbolique de la *menorah* et des deux témoins prophètes, Jean présente la mission de l'Eglise comme témoignage de lumière au cœur de l'histoire. Nous développerons ce message en découvrant l'Eglise comme lumière à travers la symbolique des chandeliers (I) ...," Paulin Poucouta, "La Mission Prophétique de l'Église dans l'Apocalypse Johannique," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 110, no. 1 (1988): 38.

³⁸³ Ibid., 40. For Prigent's original thoughts, see Pierre Prigent, *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*. Commentaire du Nouveau Testament (Lausanne; Paris: Delachaux et Niestle, 1981), 35.

where the one like the Son of Man is walking amidst the lampstands. Because submerged metaphors often present the tenor of the metaphor later in a text, the earlier reference also presents a focus and frame for which one must account. Poucota's understanding, correct or not, does attempt to account for this early focus and frame.

Unsurprisingly, Beale's interpretation of the lampstands is lengthy by comparison to other commentators. Like the others here, he believes Exodus 25, 27, and Numbers 8 are significant background passages to the lampstands. Like Osborne, he sees Zechariah 4:2 and 4:10 as the most critical passage for understanding John's lampstands.³⁸⁴

However, Beale is unique in his argument as he connects Zechariah 4:2-10 with Rev. 1:4, 4:5 and 5:6, calling the Zechariah passages "clear allusions" by John,³⁸⁵ believing that the confluence of these passages all direct one's understanding of 1:12-20. The three Revelation passages all refer to seven spirits, but each passage, while potentially related, is slightly different. Rev. 1:4 records "seven spirits before his throne," referring to God. Rev. 4:5 has "seven flaming torches" or lamps, "which are the seven spirits of God." Rev. 5:6 describes the Lamb, as if slaughtered, standing between the throne and the four living creatures, but amid the elders. This lamb has seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

If John is clearly alluding to Zechariah, then one must examine Zechariah, if only briefly. In Zechariah 4:10, which is the crux of the argument, Zechariah writes, "these seven are the seven eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth." The idea of seven spirits in the Revelation passages and the seven eyes of the Lord in Zechariah are the seeming connection for Beale.

³⁸⁴ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 206.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

Beale details his work and does what other commentators fail to do. He attempts to trace for readers his reasoning in drawing the connections. However, one cannot help but wonder if the temptation of the similarities is what draws him and not the actual metaphorical comparisons. This is because, while he focuses on the similarities in the passages, his commentary does not account for the discontinuity and there is some devil in the details.

On dissimilarities, it is necessary to note that only one lampstand is present about which Zechariah's vision is clear. There is a single lampstand with a bowl on top of it, presumably for oil.³⁸⁶ The lampstand possesses seven lamps and each of the seven lamps has seven lips, totaling forty-nine lips, or spouts.³⁸⁷ On each side of the lampstand are two olive trees, each with a golden pipe transporting oil from the respective tree to the bowl on top of the lampstand.³⁸⁸

The meaning of Zechariah's text, via the explanation from the angel, is not as clear. In later defining what one calls a submerged metaphor, the angel states, "these seven are the eyes of the Lord." However, to what "these seven" refer is ambiguous. Beale seems to argue that the seven refers to the lamps,³⁸⁹ and thus, in the language of this study, they become vehicles of a submerged metaphor in which Zechariah later gives the tenor, the seven eyes of the Lord, which

³⁸⁶ So Eugene H. Merrill, "An Exegetical Commentary -- Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi," in *Minor Prophets Exegetical Commentary Series* (Biblical Studies Press, 2003), 133.

³⁸⁷ Smith notes that Robert North traced the archaeology of lampstands finding seven-spouted lampstands as early as 1450 B.C. in Ugarit and 1400 B.C. in Dan, Gezer, and Lachish, Ralph L. Smith, *Micah--Malachi*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1998), 205. Sussman catalogs a number of four, five, and multi-spouted saucer lamps in Israel during numerous periods, including the Early Bronze I, II, III, and IV eras, Varda Sussman, *Oil-Lamps in the Holy-Land: Saucer Lamps. From the Beginning to the Hellenistic Period. Collections of the Israel Antiquities Authority*. BAR International Series 1598 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), 10-19. For seven-spouted oil-lamps, see especially her catalogue of plates 1445-1451, where 1446 is from the sanctuary of Tel Dan, dating to Iron II, and plates 1445 (Iron IIB) and 1447 (Iron IIC) are also from Tel Dan, *ibid.*, 385, 486. Nakhai includes a photographic inset of one of the seven-spouted pedestal lamps found on the *Bamah* (raised platform) of Tel Dan as well. She explains that Jeroboam built the sanctuary at Dan to rival the Jerusalem temple and calls the lamp a cult object, specifically observing its similarity to Zechariah 4:2, Beth Alpert Nakhai, "What's a Bamah? How Sacred Space Functioned in Ancient Israel," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 20, no. 3 (May/June 1994): 18.

³⁸⁸ McComisky notes that Rev. 11 draws upon Zechariah 4, listing two lampstands instead of one, but, given the differences, does not include the seven lampstands of Rev. 1 as alluding to Zechariah, McComisky, "Alteration of OT Imagery in the Book of Revelation: Its Hermeneutical and Theological Significance," 309.

³⁸⁹ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 207.

range through the earth. One can rewrite the metaphor to read, the seven eyes of the Lord, which range through the earth, are the seven lamps each with seven lips. On the other hand, one wonders, does each lamp have one lip?

Nevertheless, this understanding, according to Smith, does not account for Zechariah 3:9. There Zechariah is having a vision of Joshua, the high priest, wearing filthy clothes. The Lord places before Joshua a stone that has seven eyes.³⁹⁰ What those seven eyes represent goes undisclosed and the vision of Joshua concludes.

Zechariah has another vision in chapter four regarding Zerubbabel and seven lamps with seven lips each. While the seven lamps, or seven lips for that matter, would be closer antecedents, Smith argues that the vision of chapter 4 interrupts or continues what is taking place in 3:9.³⁹¹ In this way, the seven of 4:10 are the seven eyes of the stone in 3:9 and the angel is clarifying this situation for Zechariah.³⁹² If correct, the metaphor would be the seven eyes of the Lord are the seven eyes on the stone. In this way, Smith draws together the two uses of the word eyes in the near co-text.

The Hebrew of Zech. 3:9 contains עֵינַיִם, 'ê·nā'·yim, translated in most English versions as eyes, facets in the NRSV, although the root, עָן, 'ā·yin, appears in places as springs or fountains.³⁹³ The LXX's ὀφθαλμοί is unambiguously eyes. In either case, the burden of proof rests in demonstrating how John's spirits, πνεύματα, in Rev. 4:5 and 5:6 are allusions to seven eyes.

³⁹⁰ The NRSV incorrectly reads seven facets.

³⁹¹ Smith, *Micah--Malachi*, 203.

³⁹² One also wonders if 3:9-4:10 is an *inclusio*.

³⁹³ E.g. Exod. 15:27, Pr. 8:28. BDB notes the eye could be the eye of a wheel, as in Ezek. 1:18 and 10:12, or the eye of a stone, as here in Zech. 3:9, Brown, Driver, and Briggs, eds., *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 744-745.

Thus, while the metaphoric structure of Zech. 4:2-10, is relatively clear, it remains difficult to determine what Zechariah means by writing of the seven eyes of the Lord ranging through the earth. No doubt, he is incorporating another form of figurative language. At the very least, as is common in the OT, he attributes to God anthropomorphic characteristics.

The angel is additionally clear in explaining the two olive trees, another submerged metaphor. The two olive trees are the vehicle, given first, and the later explanation of the tenor is that they are “the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” The complete metaphor then is the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth are the two olive trees. As with the lamps above, the metaphoric elements here are clear, but the meaning or identify of the two anointed ones remains a mystery.³⁹⁴ Just because one can identify something as metaphor, does not always mean that the metaphor’s meaning is clear.

What is clear is that the angel in Zechariah 4 does not explain the meaning of several key components of the vision for Zechariah. He does not include the tenor in what is possibly another submerged metaphor -- the lampstand. If the lampstand follows the same pattern as the other two submerged metaphors, then one could say “something” is the lampstand with the oil bowl on top, whereas the lampstand is the vehicle.

In the absence of an explicit tenor, Beale supposes that the lampstand is a synecdoche for the whole temple, which in turn represents Israel.³⁹⁵ This author has found nothing written about whether a tenor or a vehicle can act as another form of figurative language apart from symbol, such as synecdoche. Either way, this results in two metaphors. One would understand them as,

³⁹⁴ Prigent posits that the lampstand is Israel and the two olive trees are Joshua and Zerubbabel, Pierre Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John*. trans., Wendy Pradels (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 352.

³⁹⁵ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 207.

Israel is the lampstand and Israel is the temple, whereby the lampstand is synecdoche for the temple. Both metaphors propose Israel as the tenor of the metaphor.

Beale also argues that the lamps on the lampstand represent the presence of God with his people, using the oracle of Zechariah 4:6 as support. There God declares, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” Beale understands the spirit of the Lord here to be the light of the lamp representing God amidst his people.³⁹⁶

To this assertion, Ralph Smith cautions that if one really understands the lampstand or the lamps as the presence of the Lord, rather than exactly what the angel says they are, the seven eyes of the Lord, then this could mean that since the two olive trees give oil to the lampstand, God is dependent on someone, in this case Joshua and Zerubbabel, or something else.³⁹⁷ For those stressing the independence of God as part of his character, this section requires some careful thinking.

Additionally, Zechariah does not indicate what, if any, metaphorical meaning exists regarding the bowl on the lampstand. It is a fascinating piece of information that goes unexplained. Similarly, there is no explanation given for the golden pipes which transmit the oil and if the oil is a metaphor, the angel offers no tenor for it either.

While Beale and others are correct to look for comparisons between the passages and to note the similarities, one must also attend to the discontinuities. While there is little doubt that Rev. 11:4 and its co-text are likely allusions to Zechariah, John’s text in Rev. 1 does not mention the bowl for oil, the oil itself, nor the lamps, lamp lips, olive trees, or golden pipes. John’s attention is upon the lampstands. Instead of lamps, he writes of stars and angels. Only the word

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Smith, *Micah--Malachi*, 204.

seven and the similarity of lampstand and lampstands are present. A two-word similarity lacks fortitude for a clear allusion between Rev. 1 and Zech. 4.

These dissimilarities are enough to reiterate McComisky's above caution. While the OT is obviously the inspiration and genesis for many of John's images, metaphors, and symbols, John changes them substantially enough as to alter their meaning to serve his purpose. This too fits Van der Watt's previous assertion that an author's overall message ultimately trumps all in determining metaphoric meaning. John's message in Rev. 1 and Zechariah's message in his fourth chapter are not identical in form nor in purpose. In this case, while acknowledging certain shared cultural influences from the OT, it is best to view the co-text and context of John as the ultimate interpretative guide rather than woodenly forcing upon Rev. 1 the co-text and context of Zech. 4. One might also look to another OT co-text and context as the influence for Rev. 1.

2.3.2 Overview of Lampstands

As with the angels, stars, and the number seven, a dynamics of metaphor approach warrants some brief overview of lampstands in the ANE and in the biblical text in a search for possible meaning.

Regarding the Hebrew OT, it appears that of forty-two references to מְנוּרָה, m^enô·rā(h), lampstand, only one does not refer to the temple furnishing. In 2 Kgs. 4:10, one reads that the Shunamite woman requested her husband to build an upper chamber for Elisha. It contained a bed, table, chair, and a lampstand. All other references are to the temple lampstand(s).

The survey of lampstands also reveals that in the earliest days of the tabernacle or tent of meeting, used here interchangeably,³⁹⁸ that there was one lampstand of pure gold. In Ex. 25:31ff, the first reference to the lampstand in the OT, one reads the lampstand has a shaft with six branches extending from it, three on the left and three on the right. Under each pair of branches is to be a cup or bowl, shaped like an almond flower with buds and blossoms.³⁹⁹ There were to be four cups, but Ex. 25 only describes three of them, that one cup should go under each pair of branches – three cups for three sets branches.⁴⁰⁰

This is perhaps where Zechariah's vision in Zech. 4:2 helps. He sees a lampstand with a bowl on top and does not mention the other three bowls or cups. Either this is an intentional omission because his lampstand only has one bowl, or this is where one learns of the missing fourth bowl from Ex. 25. It goes on top of the lampstand itself. Since each of the four cups was to be made in one piece with the shaft (Ex. 25:36), it is likely that there is one almond blossom bowl on top and one each under the pairs of branches.

³⁹⁸ Exodus 40:24 uses these terms interchangeably, although there is some debate as to whether they were two different tents, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 140. See also Benjamin Sommer, "Conflicting Constructions of the Divine Presence," *Biblical Interpretation* 9, no. 1 (2001).

³⁹⁹ For more on the menorah in the shape of a tree, especially the tree of life, read Carol L. Meyers, "Was There a Seven-Branched Lampstand in Solomon's Temple?," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 5, no. 5 (September/October 1979): 55-56. Taylor, drawing on the almond blossoms from Exodus, believes the Menorah is a depiction of the almond tree, Joan E. Taylor, "The Asherah, the Menorah and the Sacred Tree," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 66, (1995): 30. Parpola writes that the Menorah was a stylized symbol of the tree of life, and as such, with other religious symbols, epitomizes the use of visual symbols for complex ideologies, Simo Parpola, "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 52, no. 3 (July 1993): 168. Raley's view is more esoteric. Quoting Meyers, he argues that the menorah is not a tree, but rather a reed, which scripture associates with Egypt. In this manner, the menorah symbolizes "Israel's point of origin, its slavery in Egypt." He further argues that since almond trees were not present in Egypt and that neither the Egyptians nor Israelites were likely to have seen them, they represent Canaan, and symbolize "the Lord's watchful performance of his word for Israel in the land," Matthew Eric Raley, "The Painter and the Tree: A Biblical Rationale for Visual Art," *Caesura* 2, no. 2 (2015): 47.

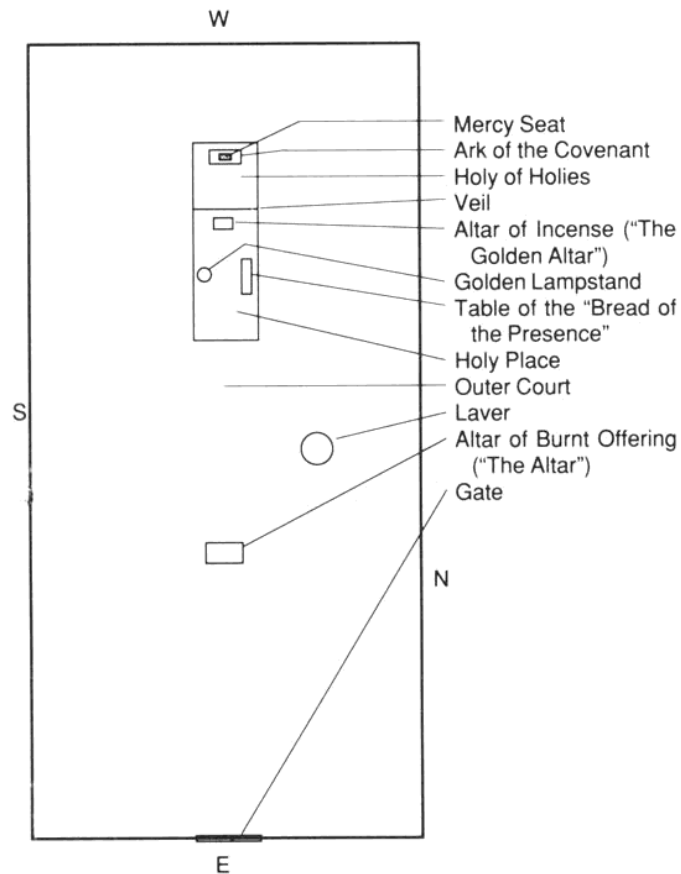
⁴⁰⁰ Hachlili takes issue with stating that the earliest description of the lampstand occurs here in Exodus and other books of the Pentateuch. Ostensibly, disagreeing with the general attitude of biblical studies regarding the antiquity of the Pentateuch, she supposes that the "seven-armed menorah does not antedate the Second Temple period," Rachel Hachlili, *The Menorah, The Ancient Seven-Armed Candelabrum: Origin, Form and Significance*. ed. John J. Collins, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, vol. 68 (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2001), 9. It is possible she bases her assertion of the menorah not antedating the second temple due to her argument elsewhere that there are no artistic depictions of the seven-armed menorah prior to the second half of the first century B.C.E., Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, 238.

There were to be seven lamps on the lampstand (Ex. 25:37, Ex. 40:4), and since there only six branches, one assumes again that the shaft itself not only contained a bowl, but also a place for a single lamp as well.⁴⁰¹ This odd numbered lamp and bowl, attached to the shaft, may have held a position of prominence, perhaps representing the Sabbath or seventh day, as one discusses above in the section on the number seven. The snuffers and trays for this lampstand were also to be of pure gold.

Lev. 24:4 and Num. 3:31 both affirm the use of one lampstand. Ex. 26:35 indicates the lampstand was outside the veil separating the Ark of the Covenant, which was in The Holy of Holies, or Most Holy Place, from the holy place. The Table of the Presence was on the north side of the holy place, and the lampstand on the south, as seen in the illustration here.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Hachlili argues that the original *menorah* of the tabernacle had only one light, consisting only of a base, shaft, and light, and that any references to the six branches are later interpolations. She points to Num. 8:4, which only references a lampstand, and to 1 Sam. 3:3, which she translates as, “and the lamp of God had not yet gone out ...” as evidence of an early, single light/bowl lampstand, Hachlili, *The Menorah, The Ancient Seven-Armed Candelabrum: Origin, Form and Significance*, 12. However, with regard to 1 Sam. she takes liberty with the word נֵר, lamp. The word lamp and lampstand, while sharing a root in Hebrew, are not interchangeable in most OT texts. It is quite possible that the singular lamp or light, is used as a collective singular, referring to all the lamps or the entirety of light which the lamp produces. See also Exod. 27:20 and Lev. 24:2-4 for other possibilities of the collective singular with respect to lamp. Lastly, she does not consider that 1 Sam. 3:3 could be a figurative use of lamp, as in 2 Sam. 21:17 where the author proclaims David to be the lamp of Israel. A figurative use is not unheard of in the ANE as Yarikh, the Ugaritic goddess, is twice called the lamp of heaven in Nikkal and the Kotharat, John C.L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*. (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 128-129. The word *nyr*, which Gibson translates as lamp, may be illuminator or lamp, see William M. Schniedewind and Joel H. Hunt, *A Primer on Ugaritic: Language, Culture, and Literature*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 200; Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 152. The temple setting of 1 Sam 3:3 makes a literal understanding tempting, but the idea of the lamp going out, if this is in fact the seven-branched *menorah*, is problematic in light of Exod. 27:20 and Lev. 24:2-4, which indicate the lamp should burn continually. Alternatively, one wonders whether it is possible the light of the *menorah* from Exod. did go out, necessitating cultic change. Finally, in another place, Hachlili argues that ancient associations of the menorah have died out due to the highly stylized nature of later menorah depictions. She gives as an example Goodenough’s suggestion that the early lampstand mimicked a tree, Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, 236.

⁴⁰² Illustration from *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), s.v. “Tabernacle, Temple.”



Num. 4:9 indicates that when the Israelites broke camp, the lampstand was likely the third piece of furniture covered, after the Ark and the table of the Presence, and among a second kind of class of furniture.⁴⁰³ Aaron and his sons were to cover the sanctuary furniture before the Kohathites carried it. They covered the Ark first with the veil that separated it from the holy place, then wrapped the Ark in leather, and then covered the leather with a blue cloth. They covered the table with a blue cloth, then a scarlet cloth, and then leather.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰³ Haran notes that not only does the placement of the furniture within the temple signify gradations of holiness, but so do the descriptions of their construction material, as well as directions for packing and transport. The Ark is the highest class of sanctity and all of the furniture in the outer sanctuary is of similar sanctity, Menahem Haran, "The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle; And, Grades of Sanctity in the Temple," in *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1978), 158-165.

⁴⁰⁴ 4Q121 Septuagint Numbers is missing this information, but interpolators recreating the missing fragments use the term *λυχνία* for lampstand, *φαισεως* for the light it gives off, and *λυχνους* for the lamps of the lampstand, 4Q121 *Septuagint Numbers*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2010), col. ii fr. 14.

They then covered the lampstand with blue cloth and then leather, and it was transported via a bar, enabling multiple people to carry it.⁴⁰⁵ They did the exact same thing to the golden altar and the articles used for ministering, covering them and transporting them via a bar. The bronze altar they covered with purple cloth.

This reveals there was one lampstand when the tabernacle was portable and the biblical texts provide careful instructions for its packing, identification, and transport, along with its lamps, wick trimmers, trays, and jars for oil.

However, after Solomon constructed the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, the lampstand tradition inexplicably changes. In 1 Kgs. 7:49, one notes that Solomon placed ten lampstands of gold in front of the inner sanctuary, five on the right and five on the left. There is no reference to one *menorah* or lampstand as in Exodus, and one may conclude the possibility that the number of stands has increased ten-fold and the location is rather ambiguous compared to the tabernacle.⁴⁰⁶

1 Chron. 28:15 affirms a plural number of lampstands, but does not give the specific number. It also adds to the description of the temple lampstands in a way that 1 Kgs. omits, noting that there were lampstands both of gold and of silver. Presumably, the golden lampstands were for the service in the holy place while the silver lampstands served mundane purposes in the temple.

⁴⁰⁵ Num. 4:10-12.

⁴⁰⁶ 1 Chron. 29:19 ascribes the source for increasing the number of lampstands to the Lord, who in turn revealed this to David.

2 Chronicles 4:7 affirms there were ten lampstands and 4:19-20 records also that Solomon made multiple tables for the bread of the Presence, with multiple golden lampstands and lamps, which were to burn in front of the inner sanctuary.⁴⁰⁷

When the Babylonians burned the temple, as recorded in Jeremiah 52, Jeremiah 52:19 specifically records that Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard to Nebuchadnezzar, carried off the lampstands plural, and it also notes that he took lampstands and other utensils made both of silver and gold.⁴⁰⁸

The only problematic passage with respect to the issue of the singular and the plural is 2 Chron. 13:11, which indicates a singular, golden lampstand in a later monarchical period. It could be, as Hachlili notes, perhaps the ten lampstands lit a hallway outside the inner sanctuary but did not replace the one *menorah*.⁴⁰⁹

Sperber seems to affirm the idea that the one *menorah* from the tabernacle remained in the temple and that Solomon's ten lampstands are to the right and to the left of the one

⁴⁰⁷ Hachlili however, indicates these were for a hallway in the temple and, ostensibly, did not replace the single *menorah*, Hachlili, *The Menorah, The Ancient Seven-Armed Candelabrum: Origin, Form and Significance*, 7.

⁴⁰⁸ That there is no reference to the Ark of the Covenant and some of the other specific temple furnishings gave rise to many traditions and myths as to the location of these objects. Boustán points out the myth in 2 Maccabees 2:1-8 that Jeremiah sealed the Ark and the Tent of Meeting in a cave, Ra'anan S. Boustán, "The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire," in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Gregg Gardner and Kevin L. Osterloh, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 328. Boustán fails to mention the altar of incense from the same passage. Similarly, he notes that 2 Baruch imagines that an angel, with Jeremiah as a witness, enters the Holy of Holies and removes the cult objects, *ibid.* 2 Baruch 6:7 records that an angel took the veil, the ark, the mercy-seat, the two tables, the priest's clothing, the altar of incense, the forty-eight precious stones which adorned the priest, and the all the holy vessels, and gave them to the earth, which swallowed them, Robert Henry Charles, ed. *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:484. 2 Baruch does not mention the *menorah*. Boustán believes this is because 2 Baruch's author writes in such a way as to address the time of the Babylonian captivity, but it laments the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70. The absence of the *menorah* in the story likely demonstrates the author's ignoring of the fact that Titus has already paraded the *menorah* through the streets of Rome, Boustán, "The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire," 329. It is interesting that while many of the myths involve Jeremiah, they do not speculate that Jeremiah took the vessels of the temple to Egypt with him upon his escape prior to the exile. Rosenberg speculates that the Jews built a temple at Elephantine prior to 525 B.C. in response to the Babylonian destruction of the Jerusalem temple and it contained temple vessels, though probably imitations, Stephen G. Rosenberg, "The Jewish Temple at Elephantine," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67, no. 1 (March 2004). While no evidence exists that the vessels went to Egypt, such a myth would be unsurprising.

⁴⁰⁹ Hachlili, *The Menorah, The Ancient Seven-Armed Candelabrum: Origin, Form and Significance*, 7-8.

menorah.⁴¹⁰ However, he also notes that after the exile and during the rebuilding of the Second Temple, there was a distinct return to only one *menorah* and not to Solomon's additional lampstands.⁴¹¹

Meyers believes that attributing the tabernacle *menorah* to the temple may go beyond the biblical record, and that many people anachronistically believe there was a single *menorah* in Solomon's temple based on the tradition in the Second Temple.⁴¹²

This lacuna in the biblical text regarding the *menorah* or *menoroth* in the case of Solomon's temple, naturally leads to speculation. Did the Babylonians destroy the one *menorah* or ten *menoroth* when they sacked the temple? Did they carry it off to Babylonian? Did they melt it down? Did the earth swallow it?⁴¹³

It seems that if the *menorah* or *menoroth* still existed after the Babylonian exile, Cyrus would have returned them to the exiles who were restoring Jerusalem and the temple, as in Ezra 1:7-11. However, the text does not mention them or any of the other significant articles. Sperber, using the term candlestick instead of lampstand, believes the exiles created a new candlestick, "made completely anew, and based upon the pattern of the Mosaic one."⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ Daniel Sperber, "The History of the Menorah," *The Journal of Jewish Studies* XVI, no. 3,4 (1965): 135.

⁴¹¹ Sperber cites the Mishnah for support of the one candlestick in the Second Temple, *ibid.*, 137. He notes Tamid 3.9.G, which reads, "A stone was before the candlestick, and on it were three steps, on which the priest stands and fixes the lamps," Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1988), 867. He does not mention Tamid 1:4.N, which speaks of "the ashes of the inner-most altar and the candlestick," *ibid.*, 864.

⁴¹² Meyers, "Was There a Seven-Branded Lampstand in Solomon's Temple?," 48.

⁴¹³ Boustán, as one notes above, recounts the many ancient myths surrounding the menorah, but includes modern ones as well, like the one about the Vatican intentionally hiding the candlestick from the Jews. Reflecting on 2 Baruch, and following Weitzman, he believes the creation of these myths, particularly the ones which hide the vessels in Israel, is some kind of psychological strategy offering the reader hope that the "real temple vessels ... remain ready at hand in the soil of the Land of Israel," Boustán, "The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire," 329.

⁴¹⁴ Sperber, "The History of the Menorah," 137.

His evidence for this is the poetic statement in Sirach 26:17, in which the author likens the beauty of a good wife's face to "the lamp shining on the holy candlestick."⁴¹⁵ While this is most certainly figurative language in the form of simile, the beautiful face is as the lamp shining on the holy candlestick, Sperber cites that since scholars date Sirach prior to 175 B.C. it supports his concept of the reconstructed *menorah*.⁴¹⁶

Whether the first exiles to return from Babylon fashioned a single lampstand is unknown given the current evidence. However, it does seem likely that at some point a lampstand or lampstands were again in the Second Temple prior to the Hasmonean period.

One could point to 1 Maccabees 1:21 as evidence of at least one lampstand present prior to Hasmonean rule, and this passage lends support to the single lampstand tradition. There one reads regarding Antiochus Epiphanes, "And in (his) arrogance he entered into the sanctuary, and took the golden altar, and the candlestick for light, and all its accessories, and the table of the shewbread ..." ⁴¹⁷ Antiochus plundered the temple circa 170 B.C.⁴¹⁸ and the lampstand(s) therein likely met the same fate as the previous lampstand(s).⁴¹⁹

Against the single-lampstand tradition during the pre-Hasmonean period is the description of Josephus. Although later than 1 Maccabees, he records Antiochus as taking "the golden candlesticks" plural,⁴²⁰ perhaps following the tradition of the multiple candlesticks such as those in Solomon's temple.

⁴¹⁵ Charles, ed. *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 1:404.

⁴¹⁶ Sperber, "The History of the Menorah," 137.

⁴¹⁷ Robert Henry Charles, *Apocrypha of the Old Testament*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 69.

⁴¹⁸ So Henry Cotton, *The Five Books of Maccabees in English*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1832), 46-47. But c.f. Sperber who dates it 168 B.C., Sperber, "The History of the Menorah," 137.

⁴¹⁹ *Apocrypha of the Old Testament*, 1:69. 2 Macc. 4:32 records that Menelaus seized some of the temple's gold equipment giving them to Andronicus, Antiochus Epiphanes IV's deputy, to depose Onias. Whether the lampstand is a part of this, history does not appear to know.

⁴²⁰ Flavius Josephus, "The Antiquities of the Jews," in *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 12:250.

Sperber reasons that the multiple lampstands from Josephus' account is because the priests needed multiple lampstands should someone defile the one in use.⁴²¹ He supposes this based on Mishnah Hagigah 3:8, which reads, "All utensils which were in the Temple have duplicates and triplicates, so that if the originals are made unclean, they may bring the duplicates in their place."⁴²²

However, utensils do not equal furniture. Menahem, citing Exodus 30:26-30, writes that the sacred vessels possessed "contagious holiness."⁴²³ There one reads that Moses anointed with oil the tabernacle, the lampstand, and other furniture, including the Ark of the Covenant, and declared, "...whatever touches them shall be holy." This suggests the *menorah* was not subject to impurity but instead transferred its holiness to others.⁴²⁴ Consequently, while it is possible to purify oneself from uncleanness, one cannot remove this kind of transferred holiness after touching a sacred object and therefore the one touching such objects in an unauthorized manner is subject to death.⁴²⁵

All of this suggests that scholars will not easily settle the matter of the number of lampstands with respect to how many existed in the Solomonic temple and why, if more than one existed, the tradition changed.⁴²⁶ Later Second Temple emphasis on a single *menorah* is potentially an effort by the Hasmoneans and later the Sadducees to cling to the single menorah

⁴²¹ Sperber, "The History of the Menorah," 137.

⁴²² Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation*, 334.

⁴²³ Haran, "The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle; And, Grades of Sanctity in the Temple," 176.

⁴²⁴ Baumgarten offers fascinating insight into the Sadducees' belief that the menorah did not need purification and their mocking of the Pharisees who once immersed it, as recorded in Tosefta Hagigah 3,35, and although the literary support is much later than John, one wonders if it reflects earlier tradition, Baumgarten, "Immunity to Impurity and the Menorah," 142.

⁴²⁵ Haran, "The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle; And, Grades of Sanctity in the Temple," 176.

⁴²⁶ Meyer's believes the "constant refashioning" of the temple in Israelite history obscures efforts to understand symbolic meaning, Carol L. Meyers, "The Elusive Temple," *Biblical Archaeologist* 45, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 33.

tradition of the Pentateuch while minimizing or attempting to harmonize, the multiple lampstands recorded in Solomon's temple.

In terms of 1st Century C.E. Judaism, the single menorah tradition likely continued to dominate the Herodian temple, which the Arch of Titus best illustrates. The Arch, erected to celebrate Titus' victory over Jerusalem in 70 C.E.,⁴²⁷ depicts as part of the spoils of the Jerusalem temple a single, seven-armed candlestick, along with the table of the shew-bread.⁴²⁸ Recognizing the tumultuous history surrounding the lampstand, Meyers notes that this lampstand depicted on the Arch is the last in a series of *menorahs* for the Second Temple.⁴²⁹

Fine notes that trumpets made of fine metals are also included in the spoils of Jerusalem depicted on the Arch. He also notes that the Arch carefully places each object in relief, with the Table of the Showbread on the right of the *menorah* and at the head of the procession. Fine additionally notes that the Arch places the Table in the middle ground, highlighting the lampstand in the foreground.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷ While many scholars write of this as a triumphal arch, Darwall-Smith argues that because the word *diuus*, or transliterated *divus*, meaning deified, appears on the arch as part of the inscription "*Senatus populusque Romanus diuo Tito diui Vespasiani f. Vespasiano Augusto* (The Roman senate and people dedicated to the divine (or deified) Titus Vespasianus Augustus son of the divine Vespasian)," it renders the arch a memorial arch rather than a triumphal one because it was completed posthumously in memory of Titus' apotheosis, Robin Haydon Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome*. (Bruxelles: Latomus Revue D'Études Latines, 1996), 166-167. He previously demonstrates that a triumphal arch to Titus, erected in 80/1 C.E., existed in the Circus Maximus and was likely very large based on the size of its foundations and column fragments, *ibid.*, 95-96. Hartnett also renders it a memorial arch for the same reasons and also indicates the verb "dedicate" is often missing in such inscriptions but is understood, Matthew Hartnett, *By Roman Hands: Inscriptions and Graffiti for Students of Latin*. Second ed. (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2012), 10.

⁴²⁸ Scholars differ as to the date of the Arch's construction. Boustán writes that Vespasian and Titus celebrated the victory parade "circa June 71 C.E.," and erected the Arch in 81 C.E., Ra'anan S. Boustán, "The Dislocation of the Temple Vessels: Mobile Sanctity and Rabbinic Rhetorics of Space," in *Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History*, ed. Ra'anan S. Boustán, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 140. Fine dates the arch to 90 C.E., Steven Fine, "'When I Went to Rome ... There I Saw the Menorah..." The Jerusalem Temple Implements during the Second Century C.E.," in *The Archaeology of Difference: Gender, Ethnicity, Class and the "Other" in Antiquity: Studies in Honor of Eric M. Meyers*, ed. Douglas R. Edwards and C. Thomas McCollough (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2007), 174.

⁴²⁹ Meyers, "Was There a Seven-Branched Lampstand in Solomon's Temple?," 47.

⁴³⁰ Steven Fine, "The Lamps of Israel: The Menorah As A Jewish Symbol," in *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World: Toward a Jewish Archaeology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 146.

With respect to the candlestick portrayed on the Arch and paraded through Rome, Josephus records that the Romans in some way changed its shape. While difficult to interpret Josephus' words, it seems the Romans changed the base of the lampstand, perhaps from a trident to a box as depicted on the Arch, and they extended the branches to a greater length beyond the original. These branches then had a brass socket at the top, which likely diverges from the previous gold construction.⁴³¹ Josephus then records that Vespasian intended to build a temple to Peace and place the vessels there.⁴³²

Meyers affirms the likelihood of a Roman change, or complete reconstruction, when she notes that the base of the menorah depicted on the Arch of Titus "has human and animal forms, in apparent contravention of the Second Commandment," and thus makes its authenticity difficult to determine.⁴³³

As far as the New Testament is concerned, only Hebrews 9:2, other than the six references to lampstand/s in Revelation, makes mention of the cultic lampstand and it unambiguously refers to the tabernacle not the temple. There, as in Revelation, the Greek NT uses *λυχνία* for lampstand.⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ Josephus, "Wars of the Jews," 7:148-149. One cannot help but wonder if the fire of the temple destruction rendered the lampstand disfigured and thus needing repair, or if the Romans just decided to change its construction for artistic purposes, common in the parades. Changing the shape of the lampstand is not unique to the Romans. Onias IV constructed his own, modern gold lamp, hung from a gold chain, for the temple in Leontopolis, so Feldman and Reinhold, eds., *Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans*, 50. Furthermore, as Darwall-Smith points out, there is an allegorical nature to the figures on the arch ruling out a "realistic depiction" of the events, leaving open the possibility that the style of lampstand is altered to suit a particular story or style, Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome*, 169.

⁴³² Josephus, "Wars of the Jews." Rajak says Josephus looked forward to the year 75 C.E. in which Vespasian completes the temple, but Josephus does not mention the year, Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*. (London: Duckworth, 2003).

⁴³³ Meyers, "Was There a Seven-Branded Lampstand in Solomon's Temple?," 47. So too, Paweł Szkolut, "The Menorah Depicted on the Arch of Titus: A Problem of Its Origin and the Hellenistic Symbols Adorning Its Base," *Acta Universitatis Lodzianis: Folia Archaeologica* 26, (2009): 151.

⁴³⁴ Matt. 5:15, Mark 4:21, Luke 8:16, and Luke 11:33, all relate the dictum of Jesus that no one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket or in the cellar, but rather they put it on a lampstand. All are non-cultic references.

Of the six references to lampstands in Revelation, five of them, Rev. 1:12, 1:13, 1:20, 2:1, and 2:5, refer to the seven lampstands discussed here, and the last reference, Rev. 11:4, writes of the two lampstands and two olive trees, and this passage seems a better fit as an allusion to Zechariah 4.

If one believes that Hebrews is a later first-century document,⁴³⁵ closer in proximity to a late date of Revelation, this would seem to support the metaphorical understanding of the temple and its vessels, supposing that Christ, his church, and the spiritual activity therein, are always in view rather than a literal temple or vessels. If this is not the case, one wonders why the NT ignores the temple vessels until the writing of Hebrews and Revelation.⁴³⁶

A summary to this point concludes that John, while drawing upon the OT tradition of tabernacle and temple lampstands, changes the number of lampstands compared to the OT references and has neither one lampstand as in the tabernacle, nor the ten lampstands of Solomon's temple, but instead creates a novel metaphor. This novel metaphor involves not a seven-branched lampstand or ten seven-branched lampstands, but rather seven lampstands with no mention of branches, and in fact, they may only possess one lamp or light each in association with the angels.

Having traced a basic outline of lampstands in the biblical corpus and tradition, two additional issues arise while attempting to find potential common places for John's metaphor.

⁴³⁵ For more on a late date for Hebrews, see Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; The Paternoster Press, 1993), 29-33; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1998), lxii-lxiii; William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Hebrews*. Baker New Testament Commentary, vol. 15 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 14-16.

⁴³⁶ The Ark of the Covenant, for instance, only appears in Heb. 9:4 and Rev. 11:19. The Table of Shew Bread is uniquely in Heb. 9:2. The bronze altar plays a significant role as referenced in Matt. 23:35, Luke 11:51, 1 Cor. 9:13, 1 Cor. 10:18, Heb. 7:13, Heb. 13:10. It may be that several references to an altar in Rev. also refer to this altar. The altar of incense is in Luke 1:11, Heb. 9:4, Rev. 8:3, and Rev. 9:13.

The first is his attributive label of the lampstands as golden and the second is whether one should translate the word *menorah* in Hebrew, and *λυχνία* in Greek as candlestick or lampstand.

That John calls the lampstands golden is a key issue in identifying them as cultic. The material from which ancients made a lamp or lampstand varies widely. The average lamp, it appears, was common clay,⁴³⁷ but archaeologists have found lamps of stone and marble as well.⁴³⁸ Gold, silver, and bronze, appear to be the materials of choice in the biblical corpus. However, as one notes above, OT craftsmen made cultic lampstands of gold and silver, with the silver used for mundane rather than holy purposes.⁴³⁹

In addition to the lampstand, its snuffers, and related objects, there were other holy objects of the temple and tabernacle of pure gold as well. Most notably, in Exodus 25:10-16, Moses instructed the craftsmen to overlay the Ark of the Covenant with pure gold, and to make four carrying rings of gold and two carrying poles of gold.

God also instructed Moses in Ex. 25:17-22 to have craftsmen construct a mercy seat of pure gold, which was on top of the Ark. At both ends of the mercy seat rested cherubim of gold. The two cherubim faced each other with their wings overshadowing the seat. God continues his instructions to Moses in Ex. 25:23-30, commanding he overlay the acacia wood of the table for the bread of the Presence with pure gold. The table was to possess a gold molding, four gold

⁴³⁷ For more on the massive number of ancient clay lamps, although it excludes “Palestinian lamps in the Jewish tradition,” see John W. Hays, *Ancient Lamps in the Royal Ontario Museum: Greek and Roman Clay Lamps*. (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1980).

⁴³⁸ See for instance Amnon Rosenfeld, Shimon Ilani, Wolfgang E. Krumbein, Steve Daren, and Howard R. Feldman, “A Stone Oil Lamp with Seven Nozzles from the Late Second Temple Period - First Century C.E.,” *Liber Annuus* 60, (2010). For more on the different types of lamps in Greece and Rome, see the brief descriptions in Claire Grandjourn, *The Athenian Agora: Terracottas and Plastic Lamps of the Roman Period*. (Princeton, New Jersey: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1961), 32ff.

⁴³⁹ Although possibly writing very near the time of John, Juvenal, in his “Umbricius Leaves Rome in Disgust,” indicates that bronze lamps were possessed by the wealthy, Francese and Smith, eds., *Ancient Rome: An Anthology of Sources*, 140.

rings, and acacia wood poles, overlaid with gold, in like fashion to the Ark. The utensils of the table were gold as well.

Ex. 26:6 records that Moses was to incorporate gold into the tent portion of the tabernacle as well. God commanded Moses to fashion ten sections of the tabernacle tent from fine linen of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn. These ten sections were to be of five sections and five sections, held together with fifty gold clasps. Later in the same chapter, in verse 29, one reads that the craftsmen overlaid the frames of the tent with gold and the crossbars and rings that held the crossbars were of gold as well.

The ephod of the priest in Ex. 28:11 had two onyx stones, possessing the names of the tribes of Israel in order of their birth, mounted in gold filigree. Verse 13 records two additional gold filigree settings for the ephod and two gold chains. The breastpiece of the high priest in Ex. 28:23-26 also possessed gold filigree, gold chains, and gold rings.

One reads in Ex. 28:36 that the turban of the high priest contained a rosette of pure gold, inscribed with the words, "Holy to the Lord."⁴⁴⁰ Aaron wore this on his head to take upon himself the guilt of the people that they might find favor before the Lord.

Although these early tabernacle pieces were pure gold, John only mentions the holy city as of pure gold in Rev. 21:18 and 21:21. Otherwise, John reserves the word pure for the bright white linen robes of the angels and saints in Rev. 15:6, 19:8, and 19:14.⁴⁴¹ Rev. 19:8 is a clear

⁴⁴⁰ The NIV renders the translation as a plate of gold rather than a rosette as in the NRSV. The Hebrew קִרְטָן, *qirṭān*, tsiyts or tseets, is a flower blossom or bud, James Swanson, s.v. "קִרְטָן." *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997). See also Brown, Driver, and Briggs, eds., *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 847. One believes that the rosette or blossom on the priest's turban is an almond blossom, making it consistent with the blossoms on the lampstand, on Aaron's staff in Num. 17:23, and the flowers in the temple in 1 Kgs. 6:18.

⁴⁴¹ Given the co-textual proximity of the white clothing and the temple vessels, such as the lampstands, Evan's article on P.Oxy 840, which includes a discussion on the need to wear pure and white clothing in order to view the temple vessels, is interesting, Craig A. Evans, "Jewish Versions of the Gospel of Matthew," *Mishkan* 38, (2003). Scholars debate the idea that non-priests could view the holy vessels, as Evans article presents. Fraade argues that only priests could view the vessels, though he does not mention P.Oxy 840, Steven D. Fraade, "The Temple as a

example of a submerged metaphor, as one notes earlier, since John states the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints, though whether he intends this to refer to the robes of the angels as well is unclear.

While the use of the attributive “golden” may be an instance of attributive metaphor, it is difficult to demonstrate. In 1 Peter 1:7, one reads of the genuineness of faith as compared to gold. Peter associates the purifying process of gold in the fire to the trials his audience is suffering. These trials, like fire, purify faith in the same way fire refines gold. The metaphor in 1 Peter is related to fire, not to gold. An analogy occurs, fire is to gold as trials are to faith, but it is not necessarily a metaphor related to gold.

In Rev. 3:18, Jesus, characterized as the Amen and faithful witness, counsels the church in Laodicea to buy from him gold refined in the fire, so that they could become rich and wear white clothes. This passage is figurative, probably referring to faith refined in trials as in 1 Peter. While there is a connection between 1 Peter and Revelation here, it does not necessarily mean gold refers to faith in every usage in Revelation.⁴⁴²

Gold is, however, a frequent construction material of objects in Revelation. The lampstands are golden in 1:12 and the sash across the chest of the priestly figure is gold in 1:13. The locusts of the abyss wear crowns of gold in 9:7, humankind worships idols of gold in 9:20, the harlot wears gold jewelry in 17:4 and has a golden cup of abominations in her hand. The great city, another description of the harlot, wears gold jewelry in 18:16. The measuring rod is of gold in 21:15, the city is pure gold in 21:18, and 21:21.

Marker of Jewish Identity Before and After 70 CE: The Role of the Holy Vessels in Rabbinic Memory and Imagination," in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, ed. Lee I. Levine and Daniel R. Schwartz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 241-243.

⁴⁴² An assumption that gold is always faith would be absurd considering passages like Rev. 9:7 where the locusts of the abyss had crowns of gold, and Rev. 17:4 where the woman, or harlot, wears a crown of gold.

These gold objects in Revelation appear to fall into two categories: golden objects as signs of wealth and idolatry among those counted as wicked and golden objects identifying God's cultic community and God's blessings upon this community. The golden lampstands fall into the latter.

Another issue is Hachlili's insistence on translating *menorah* as candlestick rather than lampstand. Her support that the seven-armed *menorah* is a later development is that archaeological evidence demonstrates a seven-armed candlestick. She predicates her argument on finds such as The Arch of Titus, which portrays individuals carrying the seven-branched candlestick from the Jerusalem temple as spoils of the Judean war.⁴⁴³ What she does not address is the historical development of candles, which may have changed the construction or conception of the *menorah* during the Second Temple period. The early *menorah* was a light with oil, indicating the use of oil lamps, not candlesticks, which are probably a much later development.⁴⁴⁴

Beale notes that Midrash Rabbah Numbers 15:10 "expresses the hope that when God restores the end-time temple, 'he will also restore the candlestick.' Since, in early OT material, authors tied the hope of God's presence to the Ark of the Covenant, one cannot help but wonder

⁴⁴³ Darwall-Smith similarly calls the depiction on the Arch of Titus as a candlestick, Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome*, 166. The people carrying the *menorah* on The Arch of Titus have it upon some kind of bar. Whether this is the original carrying bar as in Num. 4:10-12, is likely unknowable. Three of the four uses of מִנְיָה, bar, are in Num., with two referencing the temple vessels of the *menorah* and the golden altar. The third, in Num. 13:23, refers to the bar upon which the spies carried large clusters of grapes between two men. This gives some insight into how one conceives the transportation of the *menorah*. For more on the *menorah* and the bar, see Haran, "The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle; And, Grades of Sanctity in the Temple," 156. Cartwright provides several high resolution digital photos of The Arch of Titus which make viewing the candlestick and the bar there accessible for viewing, Mark Cartwright, "The Arch of Titus, Rome" <http://www.ancient.eu/article/499/> (accessed 27 January 2016). Finally, with regard to those depicted as carrying the *menorah*, Szkolut calls them Jewish prisoners, Szkolut, "The Menorah Depicted on the Arch of Titus: A Problem of Its Origin and the Hellenistic Symbols Adorning Its Base," 147.

⁴⁴⁴ Bunson notes that candles are "...a largely Roman invention," and that the poor were more likely to use them, due to the expense of olive oil as a fuel. These rudimentary candles are of "tallow fat, rolled around a twisted wick." He continues writing that what oil the poor did possess would likely have been for food and cooking, Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. "Furnishings."

if after the Ark's disappearance or destruction, this hope shifted to another piece of temple furniture, such as the lampstand.

A passage worth some careful consideration that surprisingly few, if any, commentators note when exploring Rev. 1:12-20 is Lev. 24:1-4. Here one learns that the lampstand resides outside the curtain that shields the Ark of the Covenant and that Aaron is to tend to the lamps on the lampstand, morning and evening, as a lasting ordinance. It is another passage that reinforces the earliest tabernacle had a single lampstand and reinforces the significance of that lampstand and its lamps in Aaron's service, which was to provide lasting light.

Again, as with most of the metaphors and symbols related to the temple, their metaphorical descriptions may be clear, but the analogical associations are not. One must recognize the possibility that original associations from the tabernacle and Solomon's temple could have been lost by the time of the Second Temple as well as the New Testament era. Thus, while Philo may say the lampstand was placed on the south of the temple because it "intimates, in a figurative manner, the motions of the stars which give light," and these stars, "make all their revolutions in the south," it is possible that his understanding of such figurative language is not the same as it was in the earlier periods of Hebrew history, nor does this mean it is consistent with any possible understanding from OT scripture.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁵ Philo, "On the Life of Moses, II," in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 1995), line 102, p. 500. The Greek text of Philo here is difficult to translate. When writing of the south of the temple, he uses the term νοτίοις, which Liddell defines as meaning "wet, moist, damp," and indicates it may have something to do with the Indian Ocean as in Aeschylus and Herodotus, Henry G. Liddell, s.v. "νότιος." *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996). He also uses αἰνίττεται, which above translates as "figurative manner." It is an unusual word which Liddell has declining from αἰνίσσομαι, a deponent verb meaning "to speak in riddles," Henry G. Liddell, s.v. "αἰνίσσομαι." *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996). It is likely related to αἰνύγμα, which, according to BDAG, is a riddle or indirect form of communication, Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 27.

2.3.3 *Conclusion to the Lampstands Metaphor*

Again, as a metaphor, the comparison here works by way of analogy. Since analogy is A is to B as C is to D, one must attempt to determine how this works in this metaphor. Unlike the other submerged metaphor above, this relationship is more difficult to define.

However, since the lampstands link best with those of the Solomonic temple, one may argue that the lampstands are to the temple as the churches are to the world. One here follows Robert Mounce in associating the lampstands firmly within the context of Solomon's temple. He concludes that the lampstands signifying the seven churches represent the "purpose the church," which "is to bear the light of the divine presence in a darkened world."⁴⁴⁶

One also concludes, based on the evidence presented, that John contains the first, and perhaps only, instance of this metaphor in his time: the churches are the lampstands. In this sense, it is very likely that John has created a novel metaphor for his readers.

2.3.3.1 *Focus and Frame of 1:12-16*

One of the last steps in the process of determining the meaning of the two submerged metaphors which combine to form a larger composite metaphor, is to place them back into the original focus and frame of the co-text in which they were introduced, Rev. 1:12-16. Since these verses contain submerged metaphors, which combine to form a composite metaphor, and there are at least nine similes as well, one sees these verses as the foundation for an image, as one defines above. Whatever this image is, this totality of combined figures, will govern the meaning of the message.

⁴⁴⁶ Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 77.

In this way, one sees the Son of Man, presumably Jesus, amongst the lampstands and carrying the stars in his right hand. There is balance, poetically expressed, regarding the body parts of the priestly figure. He is dressed to his feet,⁴⁴⁷ has a gold belt around his breast or chest, his head and hair are white, his eyes are a flame of fire, and his feet are burnished bronze. His right hand holds seven stars, from his mouth comes a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force. These body parts provide a complex metaphor, probably a climactic description metaphor, of the Son of Man.

It is important to note regarding the two metaphors in question that nearly every commentator surveyed above, regardless of whether one agrees with their conclusion, understands that the meaning of the metaphors must be consistent with its location inside this original focus and frame of the bodily description of the Son of Man.

That said, one still must determine their relationship to this focus and frame. One believes it begins by recognizing that these two metaphors are related in terms of light, as one shows above, but they are also related in terms of this relationship to Jesus. Jesus is the central character of the narrative as well as the image. The metaphors and similes all combine to offer some message about him.

⁴⁴⁷ ἐνδεδυμένον, a participle meaning dressed or dressing, undoubtedly refers to clothes or garments in the NT. The word “robe” in the NRSV, is a contextual interpretation, but the normal word for robe, στολήν, as in Luke 15:22, does not appear. For more on ἐνδεδυμένον, see Matt. 6:25, Matt. 22:11, Matt. 27:31, Mark 1:6, Mark 6:9. In Revelation, ἐνδεδυμένον appears three times, here, in 15:6, and 19:14. In the latter cases, both the angels and the armies of heaven appear in linen, fine (or bright) and clean. In 15:6, the angels wear sashes around their chests just as the Son of Man here. Most translations use feet here for ποδήρη, although it is an adjective. The combination of the participle and adjective, both of which are accusative, masculine, single, and both of which agree in case, gender, and number with υἱόν, son, indicate the presence of a fourth position attributive construction, that is, an anarthrous noun followed by an anarthrous adjectival construction, which, in this case, does not appear in an equative sentence. The construction serves to indicate that qualities or characteristics of the son, rather than actions, are in view. One translates Rev. 1:12, “like a son of man, the one dressed to the feet.” Similarly, the remaining clause, περιεζωσμένον πρὸς τοῖς μαστοῖς ζώνην χρυσαῖαν, is the same construction, indicating attribution, “the one who has encircled his breast with a gold belt.” The adjectives serve as compliments to the participles. This attributive construction also fits the context of physically describing the one like a Son of Man. The construction cannot be adverbial as there is no verb present in the clause. Finally, the context seems to disallow a predicate construction.

Thus, John's vision seems to record a heavenly Jesus in a high-priestly fashion, perhaps performing the service of lighting the lamps. In this heavenly temple, both the light and the lamps are under his service.⁴⁴⁸ As neither an earthly temple nor earthly lampstands exist, John reminds his readers that there is a heavenly temple, in which Jesus as the high priest tends the lampstands.

Boxall agrees, writing, "The juxtaposition of the seven menorahs, evoking Temple worship, and the description of Christ's clothing strongly suggests that John sees the son of man figure as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary."⁴⁴⁹ He goes on to suppose that since Christ is in the middle of the *menorahs*, which are the churches, it evokes "the high priestly role of mediator and intercessor."⁴⁵⁰

If this is the case, it may be that this vision in some way reiterates a similar mode of communication from 1:1-3, where God communicates his message to Jesus who in turn sends it to John via an angel. In the same way, it appears that Jesus is communicating his message to the seven congregations via angels. He is providing light to the lampstands via the angelic stars.

The idea of light as a message is consistent with the appearance of the seven stars in the same descriptive sentence as the figure's mouth. The one like a son of man had a two-edged sword coming from his mouth, which is the vehicle in a submerged metaphor in the NT where

⁴⁴⁸ Philo recognizes that the earthly temple is subordinate to a greater temple, proposing that the "universal world" is the "highest and truest temple of God," and the angels are the priests, "The Special Laws, I," line 66, p. 540. The Greek reads *ἱερέας δὲ τοὺς ὑποδιακόνους αὐτοῦ τῶν δυνάμεων ἀγγέλους*, Philo, "The Special Laws, I," in *The Works of Philo: Greek Text with Morphology*, ed. Peder Borgen, Kåre Fuglseth, and Roald Skarsten (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005), line 66.

⁴⁴⁹ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 42.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 43. Easley recognizes the "priest-like" terms of Rev. 1:13 and uses the term symbol to describe Jesus' clothing as symbolic of "his ongoing work of representing his people before his Father," Easley, *Revelation*, 18. Curiously, when combining both of the submerged metaphors in 1:20, though he does not use these terms, and placing them back into the focus and frame of 1:12-16, he concludes the meaning is that Jesus "will protect his people in spite of all evil that comes their way," *ibid.*, 21. There seems to be little connection between the priestly image and the idea of protection in the face of evil.

the tenor is the word of God.⁴⁵¹ One could view this figure as communicating this sword-like word to the churches via the angels.

What this overarching image indicates is that Christ communicates with his church. The similes and metaphors of the high priest, temple fixtures, and possible worshippers, is a compelling and memorable way to remind the readers that Christ is still present among the churches and speaking to them.

In the focus and frame of 1:12-16, Jesus is the high priest, with the angels serving as the light. The angels work together with the lampstands to transmit the light. One should also regard this with Rev. 1:6 where John notes that Jesus has made “us,” the seven congregations plus himself and likely other Christians, to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father. This image of the churches as temple lampstands, of Jesus as high priest, and of the people as a kingdom and priests serving God, all form a metaphorical prime for temple images in the remainder of the book, reasonably allowing one to assume that other temple images and metaphors exist. One could therefore justify the decision to see remaining temple language as figures of speech, rather than taking them in woodenly literal fashion.

However, because so many metaphors, similes and other forms of figurative language combine to form the image of the temple, the identification of meaning is not easy as Osborne indicates above, but instead it is rather complex.

One of the complex issues that many of the above commentators over simplify is the role of the churches in being lights of the world.⁴⁵² This is because while John writes that they are

⁴⁵¹ E.g. Hebrews 4:12, Rev. 19:15.

⁴⁵² Matthew 6:14-16, indicates that the disciples of Jesus are the light of the world. There, light is on a lampstand, where it gives light to the whole house. Light in this instance is synonymous with good works.

lampstands, these lampstands in his vision are first in heaven, where the ascended Jesus resides in the rest of the book. There is connectedness between heaven and earth that one should address.

Perhaps this relationship is one of source. The churches may be the lights of the world, but the light does not come from them, it comes via the angels, which are in the right hand of Jesus. Perhaps it is significant that this light does not derive from the churches themselves, or from the earth for the matter, but from a transcendent and powerful source.

An additional point that one should make here, is that the connectedness between heaven and earth regarding the churches and lampstands may reflect the similar relationship that existed between the tabernacle/temple and heaven. If Heb. 8:4-5 correctly interprets Ex. 25:9, 40, then God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle after a pattern in heaven. The earthly tabernacle, however, was a shadow and copy of the heavenly tabernacle. One wonders then, as the NT transfers the idea of temple from the physical structure in Jerusalem, to the bodies of believers, or the church, if one is to understand that God patterned the temple of the church after the tabernacle in heaven as well.

This would explain the interconnectedness of heaven and earth with respect to the temple furniture metaphors in Revelation, and places an emphasis upon people, rather than places and objects. That is, the heavenly tabernacle is really an image of people, in fellowship with and in the presence of, God. John transfers this image, via metaphor, to God's people on earth, via the lampstands metaphor, among others.

It is likely, that as with the alpha and omega metaphor also in Rev. 1, John has created a novel metaphor here by comparing lampstands and churches. While there may be sources or influences behind this metaphor, it appears first in The Apocalypse.

Finally, one concludes by noting that the processes and method for interpreting the three metaphors in Rev. 1:8 and 1:20 serve as test cases for Rev. 11:3-4 and the theory and method one used here serves as a guide in exploring the lampstands metaphor of 11:3-4. Given the difficulty of interpreting Rev. 11 within Christian theological traditions, these test cases in Rev. 1 are foundational for a linguistic metaphor approach, demonstrating the possibility of using this method, rather than strict theological positions, when approaching a difficult chapter like Rev. 11.

3 CHAPTER THREE: A THEORY OF LINGUISTIC METAPHOR AS APPLIED TO THE LAMPSTAND METAPHOR IN REVELATION 11:4

Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months.³ And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth.”

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. ⁶ They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

⁷ When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb;¹⁰ and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth.

¹¹ But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. ¹³ At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴ The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.¹

Revelation 11:3-4²

3. Καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσίν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἐξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκους. 4. οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαι αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες.

¹ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version.*

² One includes the Greek from the relevant verses comparing lampstands and witnesses, from Aland, Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini, and Metzger, eds., *The Greek New Testament.*

3.1 Introduction

In his book, *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*, Stan Porter notes, "The study of the New Testament is essentially a language-based discipline ... to remain a study of the New Testament it must always remain textually based, since the only direct access we have into the world of the New Testament is through the text of the Greek New Testament."³

As one has repeatedly noted throughout this work, the study of Revelation's metaphors is no different. Such a study incorporates an analysis of the linguistic features of each considered text, encompassing discourse analysis, syntax, grammar, and semantics, all of which provide insight into how John uses his metaphors, as described in the introduction.

Having laid some foundation for the study of John's metaphors in Revelation, particularly alpha and omega and lampstands in chapters 1, one now attempts to transfer these metaphorical ideas specifically to the lampstands in Revelation 11. Since metaphors for John are rarely stagnant, one understands that a metaphorical study of lampstands here, as in chapter 1, undergirds and supports the other temple metaphors in Revelation. Although any conclusions here do not necessarily mean other temple metaphors or images have the same meaning.

In Revelation 11:1-2, someone, probably the mighty angel from chapter 10, gives to John a rod made of reed and tells him to measure the temple of God, the altar, and the worshippers that he sees.⁴ However, he is told not to measure the court outside the temple because it is to be left out and given over to the nations, who will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

³ Stanley E. Porter, "Discourse Analysis and New Testament Studies: An Introductory Survey," in *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and D.A. Carson, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 14.

⁴ If the angel is the speaker, one understands him to be speaking on behalf of God, since the first-person singular in 11:3, "I will give my witnesses authority," is unlikely to refer to the angel's witnesses, but rather to God's.

Immediately after describing this trampling, John records that God (or Jesus) will give authority to “my two witnesses” to “prophecy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, wearing sackcloth,” *Καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσίν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἐξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκους.*

11:4 then states, “These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth,” *οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίδαι αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες.* Based on the discussion presented to this point in the dissertation, one would understand verses 3-4 as a surface metaphor, whereby John gives the tenor and the vehicle of a metaphor in a near context. The surface metaphor appears in a copulative construction in which the tenor and vehicle appear in the same sentence or immediate co-text.

The metaphor(s) is/are, “my two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands.” Considering the analysis already presented, one understands the number two as a symbol that one separates out from the constituent parts of the metaphor: witnesses, olive trees and lampstands.

The metaphor also contains the incongruence one finds in all basic metaphors, in that if the two witnesses are animated, possessing human or human-like qualities, they cannot ontologically be inanimate objects, that is, olive trees or lampstands. One sees this best in Rev. 11:8 where the text clearly personifies the two witnesses, when John writes that their dead bodies will lie in the streets. Whether the two witnesses are literally two human beings, or themselves represent a larger group of people, that they are human seems evident. Unless one wishes to understand the reference to their “bodies” as metaphorical as well, human bodies are not olive trees or lampstands and ontological incongruence exists.

This incongruence makes these the first and easiest metaphors to recognize in Rev. 11. As one notes below, they are among four readily identifiable metaphors in the chapter that serve as a metaphorical prime for the remainder of the chapter. One discusses the other two below.

The two surface metaphors that immediately emerge here have the same the tenor but the vehicles are different.⁵ Rev. 11:4 uses the masculine plural demonstrative pronoun οὗτοί, translated as “these,” to refer to the masculine plural antecedents, δυσὶν μάρτυσιν, two witnesses, which therefore indicates that the vehicles for the metaphors are two lampstands and two olive trees.⁶ The UBS 5 reads, “οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχναῖαι.” The English NRSV translates it, “these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands.” Given the relationship of “these” to “my two witnesses,” one frames the metaphors as, “my two witnesses are the two olive trees,” and “my two witnesses are the two lampstands.”

The structure of this metaphor is like, although not exactly like, the metaphor “I am the alpha and the omega” in the Rev. 1:8. There, one has a single tenor and two vehicles as well, presenting the reader with the possibility of two metaphors that one must read together for meaning. Here, there is a single tenor, witnesses, and two vehicles, olive trees and lampstands. Thus, it is possible one could read Rev. 11:3-4 as not just two surface metaphors, but rather as a composite metaphor of, “my two witnesses are the two olive trees,” and “my two witnesses are the two lampstands,” where one cannot separate the meaning of one from the other.

⁵ One could potentially describe these surface metaphors as climactic description since they share the same tenor. See previous discussion on climactic description in the section on terminology.

⁶ Aune writes that the demonstrative pronoun οὗτοί is “discordant with the articular predicate αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι,” because it is nominative feminine plural whereas the pronoun is masculine. He cites Mussies in writing this is a common phenomenon in apocalyptic as feminine and neuter terms are often “metaphors for male persons,” David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16*. ed. Ralph P. Martin, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville; Dallas; Mexico City; Rio De Janeiro; Beijing: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 579.

In this way, the actual metaphors are set apart from the associated number, in this case two, because the number two, like the number seven above, is probably a symbol, that is, it stands for something beyond itself.⁷

John also adds an additional description to the olive trees and lampstands that one may take into consideration in attempting to ascertain the meaning of the metaphors. After stating, “these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands,” the sentence continues with “that stand before the Lord of the earth.” The Greek sentence reads, “οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαι αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες,” with “that stand before the Lord of the earth” underlined. The whole sentence is “These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.”

The use of “αἱ”, a nominative feminine plural article, provides a clue for a better translation of the passage than the NRSV offers. Since the two olive trees and the two lampstands are preceded by “αἱ,” the nominative feminine article, John’s continued use of the article in the second half of the sentence “αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες” possibly creates apposition to the first half of the sentence “οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαι,” or at the very least, creates a point of emphasis.⁸

⁷ Bovon demonstrates that two, like other symbolic numbers, is multivalent and context dependent. While it may represent discord in one context, it could also be the exact opposite in other contexts, representing instead, concord and harmony, Bovon, “Names and Numbers in Early Christianity,” 285-286. In the case of Rev. 11, one argues that the number two harkens back to Deut. 17:6 and Deut. 19:15, where God demands that at least two witnesses are necessary for putting a criminal to death. As the works of John possess nearly half of all NT references to witness, *μάρτυς*, and testimony, *μαρτυρία*, the legal context is clear. The ultimate punishment for wickedness in Rev. 2:11, 20:6, and 21:8, is the second death, necessitating at least two witnesses. Additional witnesses in Rev. that fit this legal context are Jesus and Antipas. Both are faithful witnesses, Rev. 1:5 and 2:14 for Jesus; 2:13 for Antipas. A better translation is truthful witness. These witnesses contrast with the false prophet of Rev. 13:14 and 19:20.

⁸ For more on simple apposition, read Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 48. A very helpful illustration of nominal phrases in apposition from the Hebrew Bible is Frederic Clarke Putnam, *Hebrew Bible Insert: A Student's Guide to the Syntax of Biblical Hebrew*. (Quakertown, PA: Stylus Publishing, 2002), 19-20.

According to Young, apposition occurs when a definite article, such as “αἱ” stands alone, acting as a noun as part of a noun phrase in conjunction with a genitive construction.⁹ In this case, the article is also anaphoric as it stands in for olive trees and lampstands.¹⁰ In Rev. 11:4, τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς, the Lord of the earth, all the words are genitive case. If this is a situation of apposition, then the fact that these olive trees and lampstands stand before the Lord of the earth place them in contrast with other olive trees and lampstands, perhaps those that are either not before the Lord of all the earth or those that are not standing.¹¹

Wallace argues that when the genitive or a preposition follows the substantive article, as is the case here in Rev. 11:4, it is for emphasis and “secondarily for clarification.”¹² In Wallace’s definition, that these olive trees and lampstands are standing before the Lord of the earth is a point of emphasis. While the reason for this point of emphasis is not necessarily within the scope of this examination, one does wonder if, when taken with the number two, these lampstands, specifically, are in contrast or comparison with the seven lampstands of Rev. 1:12.

⁹ Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 60. Although Young also writes of the article use in conjunction with a preposition, as using ἐνώπιον might warrant, the co-text does not support Young’s category of the preposition as well as it supports the category of apposition with respect to the genitive nouns which follow.

¹⁰ Anaphora is, “A reference back to a previous context by the repetition or the inclusion of a word or phrase,” Matthew S. DeMoss, s.v. “Anaphora.” *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001). In this case, the use of the standalone article is a simple avoidance of needlessly repeating the two olive trees and two lampstands.

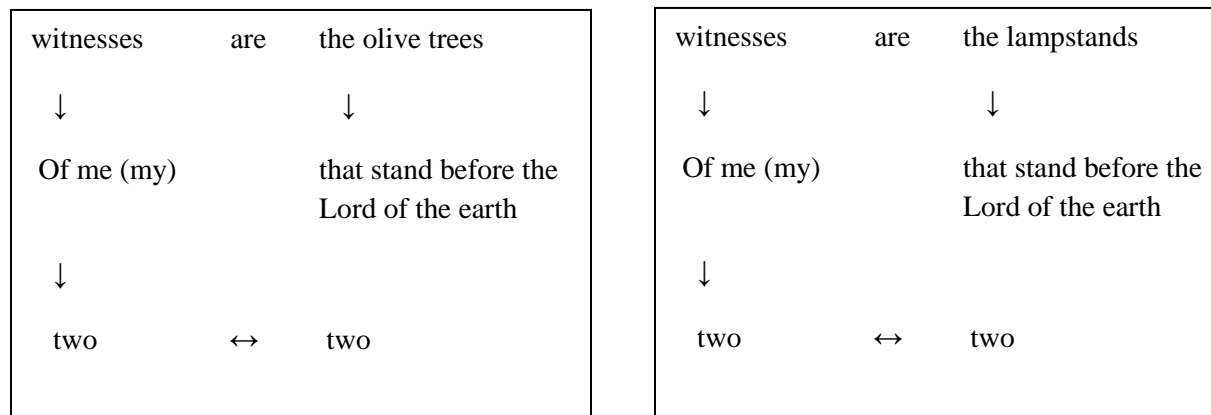
¹¹ Since John uses the idea of standing in a very particular way, it is necessary to distinguish these two. Theoretically, it is possible that other trees and lampstands are before the Lord, just that they are not standing. For examples of the relevant use of standing, ἵστημι, see Rev. 3:20, 5:6, 6:17, 7:1, 7:9, 7:11, 8:2, 8:3, 10:5, 10:8, 11:4, 11:11, 12:4, 12:18, 14:1, 15:2, 18:10, 18:15, 18:17, 19:17, 20:12. In addition, the syntax of Rev. 11:4 is significant in that the participle form of ἵστημι is anarthrous. Rev. 11:4 uses ἑστῶτες, a nominative masculine plural perfect active participle, which is significant since the anaphoric article that precedes it in the clause, αἱ, is nominative feminine plural demonstrating that one must translate the article and participle separately. The author separates the participle and article by the prepositional phrase “before the Lord of the earth” and the separation highlights that one should not take the participle and article together since they do not agree in case, gender, and number, as is the case if they were joined. Therefore, the participle is not attributive, which would be the case if the article agreed with the participle in case, gender, and number, but is rather adverbial, emphasizing the perfected action of the participle. Aune addresses the incongruence of the article and participle and efforts of later manuscripts to solve this problem in Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 579.

¹² Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 214.

For instance, in the letters to the seven churches in Rev. 2-3, of the seven churches or lampstands to which Jesus writes, one finds only two were without fault, Smyrna and Philadelphia. One wonders if the two lampstands of Rev. 11 are a representation of these two churches. In other words, while Jesus walked among seven lampstands, only two lampstands “stand” before the Lord of the earth as faithful.¹³

Regardless of what may be taking place here, what is apparent is that two surface metaphors exist in one sentence, “my two witnesses are two olive trees” and “my two witnesses are two lampstands.” These account for two of the four clear metaphors in Revelation 11.

In keeping with the patterns of the previous discussions above, a better visualization of these metaphors would be as follows:



3.2 Overview of Interpretations Regarding My Two Witnesses are the Two Olive Trees and Two Lampstands Standing Before the Lord of the Earth

As with previous discussions of specific metaphors in this dissertation, it is helpful to begin here with an overview of interpretations regarding the two witnesses before one attempts

¹³ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 575.

an effort at interpreting the metaphor through cultural and linguistic means, such as associated common places. As one provides the overview and attempts an understanding of the metaphor, it is with the awareness that, “The interpretation of the two witnesses is hotly contested.”¹⁴

One of the more common ways in which commentators interpret the metaphor, “the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands,” is to understand the two lampstands as linked with the seven lampstands in chapter 1. In this view, commentators understand the two witnesses and two lampstands in the context of the seven lampstands of chapter 1. Many who follow this view see the witnesses as the whole church, understanding the seven churches to represent the whole church.¹⁵

The second common position is to view the whole chapter through literal or historical means, seeking to identify the two witnesses with two specific historical personages, seemingly to the neglect of the metaphor.

Caird conflates both positions, noting that the two olive trees harken back to Zechariah 4:14. There, when Zechariah has a vision of a golden lampstand, with two olive trees standing by it, one on its right, the other on the left, Zechariah asks the angel giving to him the vision, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which pour oil through the two golden pipes?” The angel declares, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

Neither Zechariah nor the angel give names to the two anointed ones, but Caird, like others, assumes this refers to Joshua, the high priest in Zechariah’s earlier visions, and Zerubbabel, the kingly figure helping to restore Jerusalem and the temple, who the angel

¹⁴ Osborne, *Revelation*, 417.

¹⁵ Koester views this position as “the most viable,” Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. ed. John J. Collins, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2014), 497.

mentions in Zechariah 4.¹⁶ In believing that Zechariah's olive trees are Joshua and Zerubbabel, Caird asks whether it is appropriate then, in John's context, to look for a Christian high priest and a Christian king as historical substitutes, or whether one should see in these the two figures the church at large, since Rev. 1:6 proclaims that Jesus, "made us to be a kingdom, priests..."¹⁷

He continues, adding, "Any lingering doubts we may have about this interpretation of the two olive-trees are dispersed when John adds that the two witnesses are also two lamps." This is because Caird sees the two lamps as a "proportion of the church in all parts of the world," thereby indicating that the olive trees and the lampstands are two descriptions saying the same thing.¹⁸

Caird does not identify his interpretation as metaphorical nor his understanding of the olive trees and lampstands as a surface metaphor, but it is. Restating his view in metaphorical terms, the surface metaphor of the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lamps, means the church is the two witnesses.

Although one will not give a complete overview of Caird's remaining commentary, he does note that the number two is not symbolic, as the other numbers in Rev. 11, but rather indicates that there are two witnesses because OT law demanded that only on the testimony of two or three witnesses could one sustain a charge.¹⁹ He is vague as to why he mentions the two witnesses, except to say their testimony will not vindicate them in an earthly court, but in God's court, and in turn will condemn to death those whom the two witnesses testify against.

¹⁶ Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 134.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. Caird is not alone in this view, as Bauckham writes, "... the faithful church in its witness to the world is portrayed under the image of 'my two witnesses,'" Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, 161.

¹⁹ Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 135.

Caird does not appear to recognize any similarities between the two witnesses of chapter 11 and the two beasts of chapter 13 in his interpretation. He does not address that both pairs have authority and that both pairs can use fire to accomplish their purposes. The first two witnesses from chapter 11 can pour fire from their mouths to consume their enemies, while the second beast, in Rev. 13:13, can call fire down from heaven. As one will discuss below, any attempt at interpreting the metaphor in its context should address these similarities.

Koester, who also believes the two witnesses represent the whole church, argues that the witnesses “combine the traits of a number of figures in Israel’s history.”²⁰ Among those whose traits John ostensibly combines are Zerubbabel and Joshua from Zechariah 3-4; Elijah, since the witness have the power to stop the rain (1 Kgs. 17:1ff, 18:1ff); Moses, since the witness can turn water to blood (Exod. 7:19); Jeremiah, since fire comes from their mouths (Jer. 5:14); even Jesus, since they will resurrect and ascend to heaven after three and a half days (Mark 8:31).²¹

In combining these historic figures and their associated qualities, Koester believes that John “enhances the witnesses’ exemplary quality,” that is, based on Isa. 43:10-12 and 44:8, that these witnesses testify “no god was formed [before me], nor shall there be any after me ... you are my witnesses.”²²

Koester’s view of the background of Isa. 43 would fit quite well with one’s earlier assertion regarding the metaphor of alpha and omega in Rev. 1 as well. There, one argued that the metaphor stands for God’s exclusivity regarding there being no other gods. Furthermore, as

²⁰ Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 497.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid. For Isa. 43:10-12 as background to Rev. 3:14, see Gregory K. Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*. ed. Stanley E. Porter, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 288.

one will argue that the witnesses are a foil to the two beasts of chapter 13, the idolatry motif is intriguing.

Beale too sees the witnesses as representatives of the whole church and connecting them to the seven lampstands of Rev. 1. Writing about the seven golden lampstands of chapter 1, Beale states, “Rev. 11:1-13 confirms that the lampstands represent the church as the true temple and the totality of the people of God witnessing between the period of Christ’s resurrection and His final coming.”²³ In another place, Beale rightly recognizes that these witnesses have authority to prophesy in Rev. 11:3. Combining this authority with his assertion that the witnesses are the whole church, and combining the prophesying with John’s commission to prophesy in 10:11, Beale concludes, “...the community of faith shares in some way in the prophetic recommissioning of John in 10:11.” The purpose of the two witnesses, then, is to prophesy “to peoples, tongues, and nations.”²⁴

Boxall, admitting that the reception history of Revelation encompasses numerous attempts to identify the two witnesses with two specific personages, also argues that the multiplicity of allusions and figures make it unlikely that only two personages are in view. He sees them as “representative figures of the prophetic ministry of the Church.”²⁵ Boxall is among the few commentators who exhibit even a modicum of effort at including the olive trees in their interpretative processes, believing they represent the “royal and priestly dimension of the Church...” and noting that since the olive is generally a symbol for peace, there may be a literary twist taking place, since the olive trees do not experience peace.²⁶

²³ Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, 107.

²⁴ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 572.

²⁵ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 164.

²⁶ Ibid.

Snell assumes the witnesses are the “witnessing church,” and uses the term symbol, rather than the preferred term metaphor, in describing the relationship between the witnesses and the olive trees and lampstands. He is among the few interpreters who interpret the olive trees portion of Rev. 11:3, rather than focusing only upon the lampstands. He sees the olive trees as symbolic of the Holy Spirit, since in Zechariah 4, the oil from the olive trees that directly fed the lampstand, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.²⁷ In this way, the olive trees represent the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and the lampstands represent witness. He sees these as symbols for the three anointed offices in the OT, the prophet, priest, and king. The church is a priestly kingdom carrying out a prophetic task.²⁸

While one agrees that Zechariah 4 likely provides background to the metaphor of the witnesses in chapter 11, many of the above interpretations do not account for the differences that exist between Zechariah and Revelation. Neither do they account for the exegetical difficulties in the text.²⁹

As for differences, few interpreters observe that Zechariah does not use the word witness for the two olive trees. Nor do they take note that John does not record golden pipes running from the olive trees to the lampstands and that John has two lampstands instead of one.³⁰ The

²⁷ Jeff Snell, “Living Out Loud: The Witnessing Church in Revelation 11:1-14,” in *Dragons, John, and Every Grain of Sand: Essays on the Book of Revelation in Honor of Dr. Robert Lowery*, ed. Shane J. Wood (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2011), 114. So also Bauckham, who sees Zechariah 4 as the “... key Old Testament passage for John’s understanding of the role of the Spirit in the divine activity of the world,” Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, 163. Bauckham also sees a connection between the two lampstands (of the two witnesses) and the seven spirits before the Lord (presumably from 1:4, though he does not list this reference). He believes the seven spirits are the lamps upon the lampstands, *ibid.*, 165. One is not inclined to adhere to such a connection, since two lampstands would require fourteen lamps. One assumes Bauckham means that the seven spirits rest upon each lampstand equally, but this raises more questions than it answers.

²⁸ Snell, “Living Out Loud: The Witnessing Church in Revelation 11:1-14,” 114.

²⁹ Wolters, writing about the meaning of the golden pipes, records, “This verse, and its immediate context are bristling with exegetical difficulties,” Al Wolters, “The Meaning of Šantērôt (Zech 4:12),” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 12, no. 1 (2012): 1. One of those difficulties is that in the BHS, the golden pipes are flowing with gold, not oil as in the NRSV, *ibid.*, 2.

³⁰ Ironically, in most of the commentaries one surveyed, authors dedicate sections to the symbolic importance of numbers in Revelation, yet pay no attention to why John has two lampstands and Zechariah only one. Aune is an

context is different as well, with Zechariah's context as the rebuilding of the temple while no such rebuilding occurs in Revelation.

Interesting as well, is that many NT interpreters of the Zechariah passage overlook that Zechariah twice asked the angel to identify the olive trees in Zechariah 4:11-12. It is only when Zechariah asks a second time in verse 12, and changes his words, that the angel answers. When Zechariah first asks in verse 11, he asks, "What are these two olive trees on the right and left of the lampstand?" He refers to the two olive trees as תַּיִת, ză'·yit.

During the second inquiry in verse 12, Zechariah asks, "What are these two branches of the olive trees, which pour out the oil through the two golden pipes (NRSV)?" It is, upon inspection, a far different question. In the BHS, as NRSV reflects, Zechariah changes his inquiry from the olive trees, to the branches of the olive trees, and uses the masculine plural construct, שִׁבְבוֹלֵי, a form of the word *shibboleth*.³¹ They are in construct with תַּיִת, olive trees. While one could assume that branches and olive trees are the same thing, there may be no warrant to the assumption.

Moreover, the first question in 4:11 specifically notes that the olive trees are on the right and left of the lampstand, as in 4:3. The second question, as rendered by the NRSV, makes no mention of the location of the olive trees, but instead references branches. Linguistically, the two questions contain dramatic differences in word use.

exception, noting he believes the difference is one of textual tradition, arguing his point based on plates in Hachlili, showing two lampstands flanking the ark of the covenant, Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 612. However, the images he references from Hachlili may be of a much later date than John's Apocalypse and it would be difficult to prove this tradition influenced John. For the images, see Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, 247-249. For the dates, see Kasmin, who notes that one of the mosaics Hachlili and Aune reference, is from the third or fourth century C.E., Rebecca Kasmin, "The Vandalism of the Mosaics in the Severan Synagogue in Hammat Tiberias," *Chronika* 5, (2015): 78-79. Noga-Banai, who traces all of the reliefs that Aune mentions, states that these all date from the 4th to 6th Century C.E. with the earliest from the late 4th Century, Galit Noga-Banai, "Between the Menorot: New Light on a Fourth-Century Jewish Representative Composition," *Viator* 39, no. 2 (2008): 21-22.

³¹ Smith notes the use of the form of shibboleth is a *hapax legomenon*, Smith, *Micah--Malachi*, 203.

When the angel answers the second inquiry in 4:14, he says, "... these are the sons of oil standing by the Lord of all the earth." The branches are the sons of oil, not the olive trees, and on its face, the angel does not identify the olive trees.

Perhaps a better rendering of the second question is, "What [are the] two branches (spikes)³² of olive/trees, in the hand of the two golden [pipes], which pour out from themselves gold." Before examining this rendering of the second question in detail, it is necessary to note that the second question reveals the passage to be a submerged metaphor. Zechariah sees the olive trees and lampstand, the branches, and so-called pipes. These are the vehicles of at least one submerged metaphor, the one containing branches. Regarding these branches, only later does the angel reveal the tenor of this metaphor, saying, these are the sons of oil.

That Zechariah 4 uses a submerged metaphor is a difference unrecognized by interpreters of Revelation 11:3ff. John presents a surface metaphor, in which the tenor and the vehicle both appear immediately in a co-text and context. In John's case, the reader first meets the two witnesses, or the tenor, and then John places this tenor into a surface metaphor of, "These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands..." The differing metaphorical construction is worth considering for anyone using Zechariah 4 as the background passage.

Returning to this author's own rendering of Zechariah's second question to the angel in Zech. 4:12, there are other issues an interpreter must consider in addition to Zechariah's use of

³² Wolters, citing Kline, prefers "spikes" for šibbālîm, Wolters, "The Meaning of Šantērôt (Zech 4:12)," 2. Kline sees these "spikes," or "inflorescence of grain," as metaphors for the olive branches. He also believes the word can mean, "flowing," and argues for a double meaning in the text, seeing both the origin of the oil and a stream of oil, Meredith G. Kline, *Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical-Theological Reading of Zechariah's Night Visions*. (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2001), 163-164. One is uncertain about Kline's use of the word inflorescence, rather than spike, or branch end, because this refers to the specific period of flowering, not necessarily the period of fruit production, although they are of the same process. That said, one appreciates what Kline is attempting. He is attempting to show that the word may refer to the small green stems, on which flowers and fruit appears, which grow out of the main tree branches. The use of the word in the rest of the OT exclusively refers to "heads" of grain, and other forms of what appear to be harvest ready crops (Ge. 41:24-27; Isa. 17:5; Job 24:24; Ruth 2:2). Perhaps a translation of "olive clusters" is appropriate, or "heads of olive branches." This would place the emphasis on the fruit of the olive trees and not the trees themselves.

shibboleth, branches, instead of olive trees. Although the use of branches is an important exegetical issue, one's own rendering of the verse here proposes other issues that are obstacles to a simple interpretation of Zechariah 4 as well.

For one, it reads that there are pipes. The translation of pipes is common to all modern interpreters, but since it is a *hapax legomenon*, it is debatable. Wolters demonstrates that the modern understanding of pipes is probably incorrect, since moderns base it on several false assumptions, including etymological errors, and serious morphological anomalies. He concludes that it means, "oil-pressers."³³

This conclusion is not without problems either, unless one understands that the flow of gold is a figurative expression for olive oil, since BHS writes the pipes pour forth gold, where as NRSV reads oil. Perhaps one can understand gold as a metaphor or other figurative expression for olive oil, but Wolters does not indicate this, nor do others. What Wolters does indicate is his belief that whatever the text indicates, whether "pipes" or "oil-pressers," they are personal agents.³⁴

Additionally, the above rendering of the second question places the branches in the hand of the two gold pipes. The NASB and NIV English translations render the Hebrew, "to the side of" or "beside" the two golden pipes, likely assuming the pipes are joined as one with the lampstand, at whose sides the olive trees stood in 4:3. However, 4:3 uses an entirely different word for "beside," עֲלֵי, 'al · hî', and omits any reference to, יָד, hand. If there is a parallel, it is odd that the words change. The NRSV does not translate the word יָד at all, whether as "hand," "beside," or otherwise.

³³ Wolters, "The Meaning of Šantērôt (Zech 4:12)," 3-5.

³⁴ Ibid., 7.

The use of the words hand, יָד, yād, and hands, יָדַי, appear in Zechariah's book nineteen times and four times in the vision of chapter 4. Three of the four uses refer to Zerubbabel's hands. 4:9 records that Zerubbabel's hands laid the foundation of the temple and Zerubbabel's hands will finish it. In 4:10, those who despise the day of small things shall rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zechariah. The same use of יָדַי, yād, is in all instances, although in 4:9 it appears with the inseparable preposition, בְּ.

One cannot easily resolve the problems using the LXX either. It too changes the second question with respect to the first question, following the Hebrew. It adds branches or twigs in a genitive construction with olive trees, κλάδοι τῶν ἐλαιῶν, asking, "What are the two branches of the olive trees? The ones in the hands of the two "small golden vessels/pipes, the ones for pouring, and the vessel for pouring (oil?) the golden."

Again, the LXX does not help clarify the situation in that it too uses a *hapax legomenon* in the biblical Greek corpus for the word that English Bibles translate pipes, μυσωτήρων. One finds it in Diodorus and Herodotus, where it appears as nostrils, specifically, the nostrils of a rhinoceros and a horse.³⁵ Nostrils is the primary meaning Liddell gives.³⁶

The description includes two participles, the first articular, the second anarthrous, τῶν ἐπιχερόντων, and ἐπαναγόντων, which both function attributively, to describe exactly the branches

³⁵ Diodorus Siculus, *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes with an English Translation by C.H. Oldfather: Bibliotheca Historica*. vol. 4-8 (Medford, MA; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann Ltd., 1989), Hist. 9.19.1; Diodorus, *Diodorus of Sicily*. ed. E.H. Warmington, trans., C.H. Oldfather, XII vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. II (London; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd.; Harvard University Press, 1967), 178-179; Herodotus, *Herodotus with an English Translation: Books III and IV*. ed. E. Capps, D.L. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, trans., A.D. Godley, IV vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. II (London; New York: William Heinemann; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 114-115.

³⁶ Henry G. Liddell, s.v. "μυσωτήρες." *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996).

about which Zechariah is inquiring. The first means, “pour out,”³⁷ the other, “to bring up or return.”³⁸ The text combines these participles with the direct object, *ἐπαρυστρίδας*, which, according to Lust, et al., is a vessel for pouring oil, but this does not fit the other contexts in which the word appears, where snuffers, firepan, censors, and tongs, may all be possibilities.³⁹ The participles may indicate that whatever is in view, it is a vessel for liquid.

What passes through the vessel is also an issue. The LXX, like the BHS, records that the vessels pour gold, *τὰς χρυσᾶς*, rather than oil.⁴⁰ There are no instances in the LXX where the word for gold does not apply to the precious metal, and certainly not olive oil. The only figurative references are in poetic texts, like Proverbs, where the figures of speech still use the word in terms of precious metal.

For instance, Prov. 25:11 records, “A word fitly spoken is like an apple of gold in a setting of silver.” Prov. 25:12 continues, “Like a gold ring ... is a wise rebuke to a listening ear.”⁴¹ In Song of Solomon 5:14, one reads a metaphor, “His arms are rounded gold...”⁴²

These demonstrate that gold appears figuratively in biblical texts, but in Zech. 4, there appears to be no obvious metaphorical vehicle. Either the vessels pour gold, or this strange construction intends to point back in some way to the gold lampstand, and not what flows through the vessels.

³⁷ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 386.

³⁸ Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Revised ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), 220.

³⁹ Ibid., 222. For LXX uses demonstrating snuffers, tongs, firepan, etc. see Exod. 38:17, Num. 4:9, and 1 Kgs. 7:49.

⁴⁰ E.g., the use of the word for gold is in Gen. 24:22, Gen. 37:28, Gen. 45:22, Exod. 3:22, Exod. 11:2, Exod. 20:23, where the standard precious metal is in view.

⁴¹ See also Prov. 27:21,

⁴² Song 5:15 continues, “His legs are alabaster columns, set upon bases of gold.” Another metaphor using gold is Sirach 32:5, “A ruby seal in a setting of gold, is a concert of music at a banquet of wine.” Sirach 32:6 contains a similar metaphor. Jer. 28:7 has, “Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord’s hand,” and Dan. 2:38, regarding Nebuchadnezzar reads, “...you are the head of gold.” A simile occurs in Sirach 21:21, “...education is like a gold ornament.”

If Zechariah intends that he saw two gold pipes or presses, one cannot help but wonder if it is at least possible that the golden pipes/oil presses are a metaphor for Zerubbabel, and possibly Joshua, since they have hands.⁴³ Following immediately after 4:10, one also wonders if the two olive branches or “spikes,” are a metaphor for the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel in 4:10. If one follows this assertion, then the plummet is the word of the Lord or the spirit of the Lord, which the angel previously declared was the point of the vision, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord of Hosts.” Since the plummet is likely a sign of judgment, the word of the Lord given by the Spirit through Joshua and Zerubbabel acts as an agent of judgment in the context of Zechariah’s passage. This would mean that the two anointed ones that the angel references are the word of God and the Spirit of God.

This assessment may fit the context of Zechariah 2:1 as well, since there Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line in his hand, who is going to measure Jerusalem. The point of this measuring is to declare, “Jerusalem shall be inhabited like villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and animals in it.” The Lord encourages the diaspora to return to Zion because he is going to judge Babylon.

Again, if this brief assessment has any merit at all, it fits better within John’s context of the measuring of the temple, which one believes is also a sign of judgment or separation. The measuring and the plummet would share similar meaning in both contexts. Regardless of the accuracy of the conclusion, this textual discussion demonstrates the difficulty of drawing simplistic conclusions regarding John’s reliance in Rev. 11:3ff upon Zechariah 4.

⁴³ This view would also fulfill Wolters understanding that the Šantērôt are personal agents.

In addition to these textual differences, one must also consider the contextual differences in Revelation to process John's use of the metaphor, as well as account for the entire message of Zechariah, if that is the background, which provides greater depth to understanding Zechariah's purpose.

Linguistic and contextual differences regarding Zech. 4 aside, if the above NT interpreters are correct regarding Rev. 11:3ff, that the witnesses/lampstands/olive trees are the church, then one must view the witnesses as a vehicle in complex metaphor. One could view this interpretation in the following construction: the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands, whereby the whole church is the two witnesses. As the seven churches are the seven lampstands in chapter one, one would also have to view "the whole church is the two witnesses," either as an additional metaphor for the church(es) in Revelation, or as a climactic metaphor, which incorporates multiple metaphorical ideas into one, central metaphor.⁴⁴

Before moving to the second primary interpretative method, that of identifying the witnesses with two, literal, historical figures, one notes Aune represents a bit of both methods, a sort of middle ground. He believes John bases the story on the tradition of a single, historical figure that John morphs into two figures. However, in his summation of his excellent overview of possible interpretations and reception history, he concludes with the following:

In my view, it is unnecessary to identify any specific historical figures who might have served as models for Rev. 11:3-13 for the simple reason that the powerful ancient tradition of the dramatic conflict of good and evil represented by the confrontation of a prophet of God and a godless, evil tyrant is a mythical pattern that could easily be historicized in countless situations of conflict. The present form of the narrative has a symbolic character and should not be taken as a sequence of events that the author expected would take place literally.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Lowery sees the two witnesses as a symbol, and part of a greater typology of Egypt, describing the witnesses death as the world's opposition to the church, but does not define symbol nor his method, Lowery, *Revelation's Rhapsody: Listening to the Lyrics of the Lamb*, 94.

⁴⁵ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 603.

After this lengthy statement, Aune then writes of the “symbolic significance” of the section and the two witnesses, stating, “it is relatively clear that they represent the witness of the people of God in a godless world and that they ... will ultimately triumph over suffering and death.”⁴⁶

The second main method of interpreting these witnesses is to identify them with historical personages.⁴⁷ Indeed, so important is this task to Patterson, that he writes, “The first task of the interpreter is to identify the two witnesses.”⁴⁸ Patterson also unfortunately represents a common problem in interpreting Rev. 11:3 and, indeed, the entirety of Revelation.

As one previously argues, it is not a predetermined interpretative or theological position that should guide the reader, but rather, where possible, the natural uses of language, such as linguistic theories of metaphor. Patterson immediately appears to reject any method that does not search for two literal personages, on the basis that these interpretations represent an “idealist” approach rather than a premillennialist approach.⁴⁹ In fact, in Patterson’s view, it seems that all interpreters fit into just a few hermeneutical boxes.

That said, Patterson concludes that efforts to identify the two witnesses precisely are not possible, and writes, “...they are better seen as two remarkable Jewish witnesses who arise during the tribulation with ministries similar to those of Elijah and Moses.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Although Boxall does not believe the witnesses represent two specific individuals, his opening comments on them accurately portray the tenor of the hermeneutical situation. He writes, “The identity of the two witnesses has fascinated and intrigued commentators for centuries,” Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 163.

⁴⁸ Paige Patterson, *Revelation*. ed. E. Ray Clendenen, New American Commentary (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2012), 242. Beale represents the polar opposite, declaring, “the ‘two witnesses’ are not individual prophets,” Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 572.

⁴⁹ Patterson, *Revelation*, 243-245.

⁵⁰ Patterson does not provide any reason for calling them Jewish, other than it appears his predetermined theological position requires him to do so, *ibid.*, 245.

Kovacs and Rowland, while not endorsing the practice of attempting to identify the witnesses as specific historical personages, outline several efforts throughout history following this approach. Writing about the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, a much later document than the *Apocalypse*,⁵¹ Kovacs and Rowland note how certain church fathers believe the two witnesses are Elijah and Enoch, who will return at the end of time, since neither of them died.⁵²

Osborne similarly outlines historical efforts to identify the witnesses with two people. He notes that Hippolytus and Tertullian favored Elijah and Enoch as ones who would return. Victorinus posited Jeremiah and Elijah, James and John by Bacon,⁵³ Peter and Paul by Munck and Boismard, and Joshua and Zerubbabel by Zahn.⁵⁴

Aune adds that Böcher and Kraft believe the witnesses are Jesus and John the Baptist, with Jesus as Moses *redivivus* and John the Baptist as Elijah *redivivus*.⁵⁵ He also notes Berger, who proposes the Jewish high priests of Ananus and Joshua. Berger bases his opinion on Josephus, who describes that the Idumeans, in 68 AD, upon entering the temple at the behest of the besieged zealots, killed the priests and left their bodies to lie in the street.⁵⁶

What most of these commentators have in common is that they say nothing at all about metaphor or other figurative terms, except for the occasional reference to symbol. They do not indicate why John leaves the witnesses unidentified, and offer little by way of methodology as to

⁵¹ For an introduction to the various iterations and late dates of this work, see Orval S. Wintermute, s.v. "Elijah, Apocalypse of." ed. David Noel Freedman et al., *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 466-469.

⁵² Kovacs and Rowland, *Revelation*, 122-123.

⁵³ Aune, without supporting the idea, records the view that these two witnesses are James and John, based on Herod Agrippa I killing James son of Zebedee in 44 AD. He writes that this position models the witnesses after James and John, who themselves arise from the model of Moses and Elijah *redivivi*, Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 601.

⁵⁴ Osborne, *Revelation*, 417.

⁵⁵ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 602.

⁵⁶ Ibid; Josephus, "Wars of the Jews," 4.415-417.

why or how one could appropriately identify the witnesses with two specific historical personages.

All the above interpreters, regardless of methodology and theological persuasion, fail to understand that John presents a surface metaphor and in so doing, do not offer a proper exploration of the meaning of the metaphor in the passage. This is because all their energies, with the exception perhaps of Snell, focus upon identifying the tenor of the surface metaphor instead of attempting to understand the nature of the relationship between the tenor and the vehicle.

Whether one interprets the two witnesses as literal or figurative does not in any way attempt to determine why John calls these two witnesses olive trees and lampstands. There is no discussion of substitution, interaction, or analogy to determine meaning.

Since one understands Rev. 11:3-4 as surface metaphor(s), one now begins an effort to examine the constituent parts of the metaphor to determine meaning, rather than simple identification.

3.3 Overview of Witness in the Old Testament

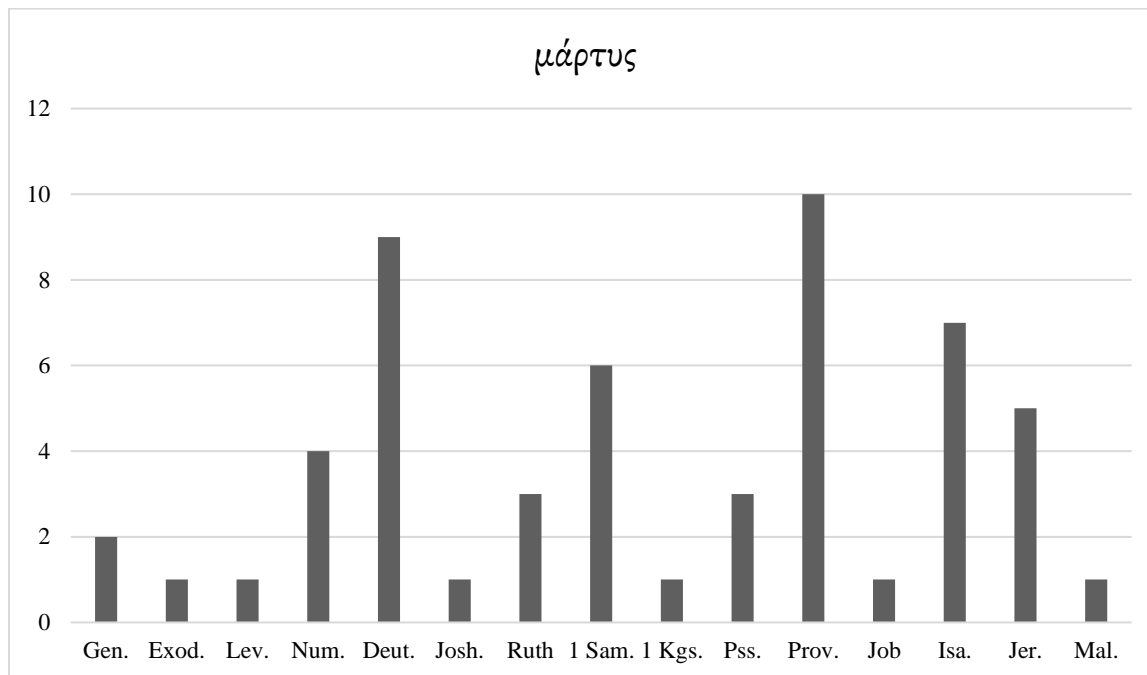
Now that one has given a brief overview of contemporary views on the two witnesses, it is necessary to examine the constituent components of the metaphor, “These (the two witnesses) are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.”

This begins with an effort to determine the possible associated common places between witnesses and olive trees and lampstands, and one now offers an overview of the word witness in the biblical corpus.

While there are several nouns that pertain to witness, such as the content of a testimony or one’s reputation, the word *μάρτυς* refers to the person or thing acting as the witness and is the

word John uses when writing of the witnesses in Rev. 11:3.⁵⁷ Unsurprisingly, the word testimony, or covenant, *μαρτυρίον*, is closely related.

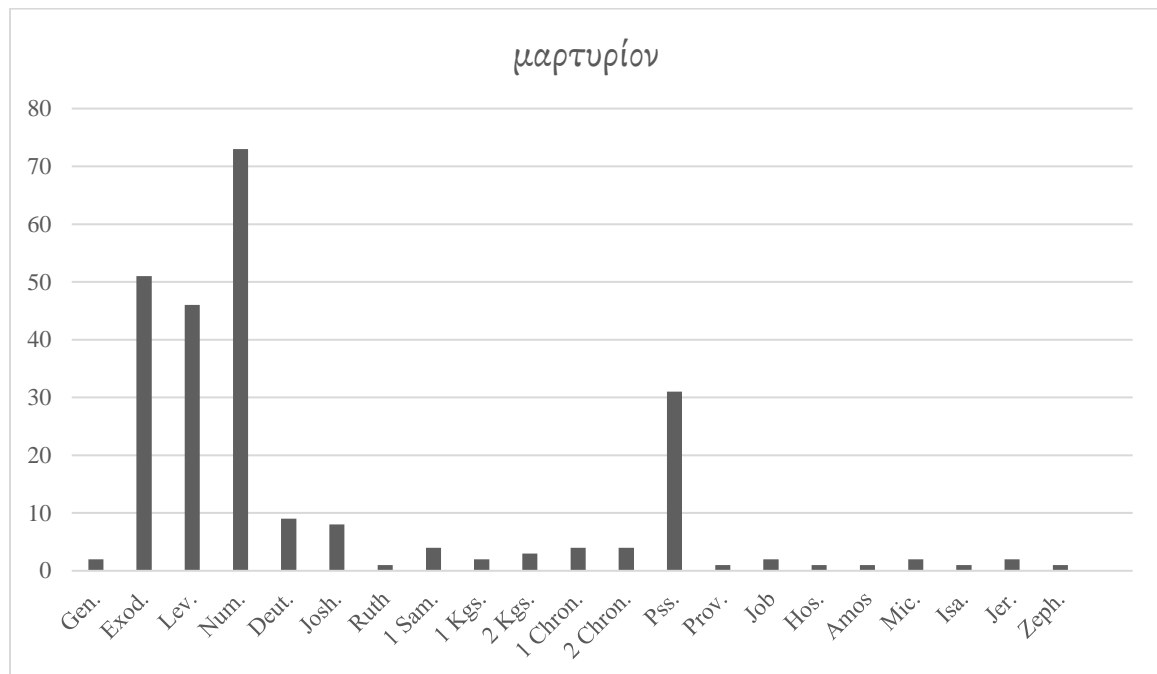
The following chart shows the word density for *μάρτυς* in the LXX:⁵⁸



⁵⁷ Cole notes that in the ancient Greek religious context, cities would delegate citizens to travel on their behalf to distant sanctuaries and offer sacrifices for their home city, or seek an oracle on behalf of their own city. They called these citizens witnesses, but used the term *theoroi*, Susan Guettel Cole, "Greek Religion," in *A Handbook of Ancient Religions*, ed. John R. Hinnells (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 279.

⁵⁸ *Septuaginta: SESB Edition*.

By comparison, the following chart demonstrates the word density for testimony, *μαρτυρίον*, in the biblical LXX:⁵⁹



Having a picture of the density of the words for witness and testimony may give the reader a better sense not only of the location of the word, but also the nature of the word. For instance, when combining both charts, witness and testimony predominantly appear in the legal texts of the Torah. Knowing this may aide the interpreter in seeing the words as primarily legal in their meaning.

Using Ralph's LXX, the first appearance of the word for witness, *μάρτυς*, in the biblical corpus actually refers to a non-human witness in Gen. 31:44. There it is a covenant that serves as a witness between Laban and Jacob, although 31:47 seems to indicate that the covenant did not serve as a witness, but a heap of piled stones created during the act of making the covenant.⁶⁰ In

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Rendsburg's assertion that Gen. 31:37 supports an Aramaic original is circular and self-defeating. He argues that because Laban uses *יגר שהדותא*, *yegar sāhadūthā*, mound of witness, an Aramaic phrase, the characters have been speaking Aramaic from the beginning of the story, Gary A. Rendsburg, "Style-Switching in Biblical Hebrew," in

Gen. 31:52, the story continues and writes that the heap of stones served to bear witness, μαρτυρεῖ, to some sort of property line or boundary that neither Laban nor Jacob would cross in order to bring harm to the other. These references set the stage for inanimate objects serving as witnesses in the OT.

BHS uses ܐܕ, ̕d̕, for witness, and while it is in the same passages in Genesis that one lists above, it appears in an additional sentence in the same section of Genesis 31 where μάρτυς is absent. In Genesis 31:50, the LXX omits any reference to witness, whereas the NRSV, drawing upon the Hebrew text, reads, “If you ill-treat my daughters, or take wives in addition to my daughters, though no one else is with us, remember that God is witness between you and me.”⁶¹

Epigraphy, Philology, and the Hebrew Bible, ed. Jeremy M. Hutton and Aaron D. Rubin, Ancient Near East Monographs (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 72. However, one could just as easily say that because Jacob uses a Hebrew expression, the two have been speaking Hebrew from the beginning. It is tendentious to assume an Aramaic original. The switch could be an indication of a diglot and there is no exploration in his chapter of the geographical setting, which might explain a multilinguistic environment. Wenham posits that the Syrians, who lived near Laban, spoke Aramaic, and that this is an Aramaism, Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 280.

⁶¹ The appeal to a god as witness is not unique to the OT. Van der Toorn even notes a text from Mari indicating that in some instances, actual images or idols of the gods stand as witnesses in some treaty proposals, Karel Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*. (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 112. One also considers the Egyptian practice of evoking the name of Pharaoh in oaths and as a witness. Miller states that the king, “acted as witness to nearly every matter of legal import that took place within in Egypt.” She also writes that those testifying would invoke the name of Pharaoh in an oath, “as the highest authority a person could swear by,” and that the king “...safeguarded truth by supernaturally overseeing the honesty of oath-takers,” because people regarded him as the one giving the law, Ellen F. Miller, “The Pharaoh and Pharaonic Office,” in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, ed. Allan B. Lloyd, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 215. So too, the Greeks invoked the names of their gods in oaths as witnesses, such as when magistrates invoked Apollo Patroos, Cole, “Greek Religion,” 308. In one particular Egyptian magic spell, the user calls Rē as witness, Joris F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*. ed. M.S.H.G. Heerma Van Voss et al., Religious Texts Translation Series (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 73. The Hittite priest Muršili II invokes an oath to all male and female deities in a prayer regarding the removal of a plague, Gary Beckman, “Hittite Canonical Compositions,” in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997), 156. In Roman literature, Gracchus calls the gods “to witness that he was being forced, against his will, to disenfranchise his fellow tribune (Octavius),” in a dispute over land laws in Italy, Francese and Smith, eds., *Ancient Rome: An Anthology of Sources*, 9. Horace poetically invokes the *Hecatonchires* named Gyas as witness in Carminum III.IV, Horace, *The Odes of Horace: Books I-IV and the Saecular Hymns*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 77. For the divine parents of the *Hecatonchires*, see Efstratios Theodossiou, Vassilios Manimanis, Milan Dimitrijevic, and Petros Mantarakis, “Gaia, Helios, Selene, and Ouranos: The Three Principal Celestial Bodies and the Sky in the Ancient Greek Cosmogony,” *Bulgarian Astronomical Journal* 16, (2011): 92. Solon calls for the mother of the gods of Olympus, black Earth, to be his witness in the court of time that he pulled up the mortgage stones of Athens to set her free, Patricia Elizabeth Easterling and Bernard M.W. Knox, eds., *Greek Literature*, The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, vol. 1 (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; Madrid; Cape Town: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 151. The invocation of gods as witnesses in ancient Greece is a certain indicator of an oath, as they become

Before moving on with an overview of *μάρτυς*, one notes that in the places where one finds *μάρτυς* in the LXX, the BHS uses *ἤν*, *ēd*. However, there are additional sentences in the BHS where *ἤν*, *ēd*, appears, but not *μάρτυς*. Excluding the Genesis passage above, one finds it in Exod. 20:16, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”⁶² It is also in Exod. 22:12, where a conditional situation occurs. If a beast mangles the livestock of one Israelite while it is in the care of another Israelite, the person caring for the livestock must bring the mangled ox, donkey, or sheep as a witness.

Additionally, Deuteronomy has several passages where the noun for witness occurs but appears in slightly different forms in the LXX. For instance, Deut. 5:20 has, “Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor,” while Deut. 19:18 has, “If the witness is a false witness.”⁶³ Deut. 31:19-21 records that the song of Moses is a witness for Moses against the Israelites when terrible times come upon them. The song is in the co-text where the Israelites will abandon God and serve other gods. Similarly, just a few verses on in Deut. 31:26, the BHS records Moses commanding the Levites to put the Book of the Law beside the Ark of the Covenant to serve as a witness against Israel.

Four of the places where *ἤν*, *ēd*, occurs, but not *μάρτυς* are in Joshua 22:27, 22:28, 22:34, and 24:22. Three of these four are all in the same co-text. Although the LXX has *μάρτυς* in

“guarantors of the truth,” Alan H. Sommerstein, “What is an Oath?,” in *Oaths and Swearing in Ancient Greece*, ed. Alan H. Sommerstein and Isabelle C. Torrance (Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014), 1. However, in some poetic cases, the oath is more poetic than legal, as in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, where Jove is witness, Ovid, *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*. (London: Sir Samuel Garth, 1826), 38. Dido, in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, calls on the gods to witness that she only “reluctantly,” used “the arts of magic,” Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 134. Schniedewind writes about the purpose of invoking gods as witnesses, particularly with respect to written treaties. He indicates that “the power of the written treaty...” is invoking gods as witnesses, “that is, there is a numinous and dangerous power to the written treaty,” William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press), 135.

⁶² One discusses this passage below regarding the LXX.

⁶³ One discusses Deut. 19:18 below, however, the Hebrew uses the word for witness twice, whereas the LXX only has witness appearing once.

24:22, the BHS uses $\tau\upsilon$, $\bar{\epsilon}\delta$, there twice, and one discusses this passage below. The passages in Josh. 22 are not concerning in that the LXX uses $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\nu$, the word for testimony, which relates to $\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\upsilon\varsigma$. In each instance, rather than a witness, the LXX uses testimony and the outcome is the same.

Josh. 22:27-28 recounts the story of Joshua and the Israelites erecting an altar to serve as a testimony that the Reubenites and Gadites, who take their inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan, will remain a part of Israel. 22:34 concludes with the Reubenites and Gadites naming the altar “Witness,” in the BHS, or “Testimony,” in the LXX.

This same substitution in the LXX of testimony for witness is in Proverbs 25:18, which again explains where $\tau\upsilon$, $\bar{\epsilon}\delta$ and $\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\upsilon\varsigma$ diverge. It is not a significant difference. There one reads in the NRSV, “Like a war club, a sword, or a sharp arrow, is one who bears false witness against a neighbor.”⁶⁴

Isaiah 19:20 in the NRSV follows the BHS in stating that an altar and pillar in the land of Egypt will, “be a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt.” However, the LXX only reads “sign,” and omits any reference to witness. Isaiah 44:9 also has $\tau\upsilon$, $\bar{\epsilon}\delta$, where the LXX has no record of witness. The NRSV follows the BHS, reading, “All who makes idols are nothing ... their witness neither see nor know.”

Returning to the survey, apart from the Genesis account above, which may be ambiguous in a legal sense, the word witness serves as a juridical term in the OT. The impetus for its legal nature lies in the covenant God makes with Moses and Israel in Exodus 19-24.⁶⁵ Averbeck understands that one cannot separate covenant and law. He writes that a covenant is, “...best

⁶⁴ Job 10:17 and 16:8 both diverge in the wisdom literature as well, but these passages are not particularly relevant for the study.

⁶⁵ Exod. 19-24 contains the fundamental elements of the covenant, including its stipulations, so Elmer A. Martens, “How is the Christian to Construe Old Testament Law?,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 12, no. 2 (2002).

defined as a means of expressing and/or a method of establishing and defining a relationship.”⁶⁶

He continues noting that one should understand law as the stipulations that “defined the agreement by laying out the obligations of one or both parties to the covenant.”⁶⁷

The basic stipulations to God’s covenant with Israel are in Exodus 20, among which one finds the command in 20:16, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”⁶⁸ The compound verb there is *ψευδομαρτυρήσεις*, combining pseudo, or false, with the verbal idea to bear witness.

When God expounds upon the fundamental stipulations of Exod. 20 in the succeeding chapters, he commands that Moses tell the people in Exod. 23:1, “You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as a malicious witness.” One may also translate the attributive construction *μάρτυς ἄδικος*, as “unjust witness.”⁶⁹

The legal context of the passage is certain as it continues in 23:2-3, commanding that those bearing witness not join with the majority to “pervert justice,” or “be partial to the poor.”⁷⁰ In both instances, not joining with the majority and showing partiality to the poor, the statements end with a form of the noun, *κρίσις*, judgment, decision, or verdict.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Richard Averbeck, “Law,” in *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*, ed. D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese Jr. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 116.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 119.

⁶⁸ Many people popularly call these stipulations the Ten Commandments. Eichrodt correctly notes that the prohibition against false witness, among others, is not unique to the Decalogue. What is unique, according to him, is “the definite connection of the moral precepts with the basic religious commands. It is the expression of a conviction that moral action is inseparably bound up with the worship of God,” Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 76.

⁶⁹ Levin argues that Exodus 23:1ff is the foundation of the legal texts against false witnesses in Deut. 19:16-21, Christoph Levin, “Rereading Deuteronomy in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods: The Ethics of Brotherhood and the Care of the Poor,” in *Deuteronomy-Kings as Emerging Authoritative Books: A Conversation*, ed. Diana V. Edelman, Ancient Near East Monographs (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 60.

⁷⁰ Durham argues that the first three verses of Exod. 23 have “...a primary connection with legal procedures in the covenant community,” John I. Durham, *Exodus*. ed. Bruce Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 330.

⁷¹ BDAG defines the word as a “legal process of judgment,” or “court,” among others, Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 569.

The goal of the negative command against being an unjust witness is to uphold the integrity of a legal proceeding. The context of the legal proceedings in Exod. 23 continues as Moses records two brief examples of the kind of impartiality required by the witnesses in 23:4-5. The Israelites should bring back the donkey or ox of their enemies if they see it going astray, and they should set free the donkey or ox of someone who hates them if they see it under a burden. In other words, do not show partiality even in the case of one's enemies.⁷²

Moses brackets these examples in Exod. 23:4-5 not only with the commands against being an unjust witness in 23:1-3, but also with examples of how unjust witnesses may act, giving the following injunctions in 23:6-7, "You shall not pervert the justice (κρίμα) due to your poor in their lawsuits (κρίσις). Keep far from a false charge..." A better translation of 23:7 is "Turn away from all unjust words (ῥήματος ἀδίκου)."⁷³ The same adjective Moses uses for the unjust witness of 23:1 appears here modifying "words." They are undoubtedly connected.

Additionally, possible unjust acts are also in Exod. 23:8-9, which include the restrictions, "You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are right. You shall not oppress a resident alien..."⁷⁴

⁷² Baker believes these laws are essentially about how covenant people should act in love, seeking opportunities to help others, rather than opportunistically benefiting from their misfortune, among other things, David L. Baker, "Finders Keepers? Lost Property in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Law," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 17, no. 2 (2007): 214.

⁷³ Translation is the author's own, drawing upon various lexicons. Louw-Nida also translate ἄδικος as unrighteous, Louw and Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 1:123. The NRSV translates ἄδικος as unjust in Rom. 3:5, dishonest in Luke 16:10, and unrighteous in 2 Pet. 2:9.

⁷⁴ Although one sees these final injunctions of Exod. 23:6-9 as examples of how witnesses should not act, Durham, outlines the arguments of Frey and McKay who make a distinction between 23:1-3, which they see as focusing upon witnesses, and 23:6-8, which they see as focusing upon judges, Durham, *Exodus*, 331. Durham disagrees with the assessment of Frey and McKay, concluding, "There is no reason why these commands cannot be applied to anyone involved in a determinative role in a legal proceeding," *ibid*. However, while one disagrees with Frey and McKay as well, Durham goes too far in not addressing the fact that the chapter begins by focusing upon witnesses in legal proceedings and not judges. This is not to discount the role of the judge, however. Deut. 1:9-18 opens the narrative of the book by placing emphasis on the choosing of just leaders to serve as judges who will, "Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or resident alien (1:16)." Christensen notes the beginning of Deut. 1, as one notes here, and further connects all the passages to Deut. 16:18, where God tells Israel to appoint judges and officials throughout their tribes, for the purpose of pursuing,

The legal discussion here in Exod. 23, regarding witnesses, and unjust witnesses, begins a common pattern in the OT. Lev. 19:12 prohibits “swearing falsely,” or swearing an oath unjustly, in the name of God. Lev. 19:15 writes that one should not act unjustly (ἄδικος) in judgment (κρίσις).⁷⁵

The integrity of legal proceedings is also the concern of witness as it appears in Lev. 5:1, where the text reads, “When any of you sin in that you have heard a public adjuration to testify and – though able to testify as one who has seen or learned of the matter – do not speak up, you are subject to punishment.” The NRSV here presents a rendering more consistent with the BHS, to which one will return.

In the meantime, the LXX renders Lev. 5:1 a conditional clause, presenting the protasis of a conditional sentence, using the conditional Ἐάν, translated if, combined with two aorist subjunctives, ἀμάρτη, might sin, and, ἀκούσῃ, might hear.⁷⁶ What the witness might hear is an oath, ὀρκισμοῦ.⁷⁷

The LXX continues the conditional nature of this legal text in Lev. 5 with a third addition to the protasis of the condition, indicating that ἐάν, if, the witness does not bring a report, μὴ ἀπαγγεῖλῃ, then he will incur the guilt. In this way, the text declares a three-fold protasis, with a

“justice, and only justice (16:20),” Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-21:9*. ed. John D. W. Watts, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 358ff.

⁷⁵ So too Lev. 19:35 prohibits acting unjustly (ἄδικος) regarding weights and measures.

⁷⁶ The entire sentence is a third-class condition, if Wallace’s categories are useful for the LXX. One discusses these conditions later in the legal contexts of witness in Deut. 17 and 19. Hittite casuistic law also uses the word “witness” in the legal sense as well. In one instance, if a man finds a sheep, horse, or ass, cannot find its owner, and maintains possession of the animal, he must procure witnesses that he is only watching over the animal. If he does not secure such witnesses and the owner later finds the animal in the man’s possession, the owner may consider the man a thief, Gary Beckman, “Hittite Monumental Inscriptions,” in *The Context of Scripture: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 111.

⁷⁷ Gen. 21:31; Gen. 24:41; and 1 Macc. 6:62 translate this as the act of swearing an oath, or an oath. See also Henry G. Liddell, s.v. “ὀρκισμός,” *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996).

single apodosis: if a witness sins, if a witness hears, and if a witness does not give a report, then he is guilty of sin.

The condition presented here in Leviticus 5 presents an important element for understanding witness in much of the OT. The condition, with a protasis and an apodosis, indicates Leviticus 5 is part of the subgenre of OT law that Knierim and others call “casuistic law.”⁷⁸ Such cases, formulated using conditions, “look forward to a possible event, but do not report already adjudicated cases,” and “they are formulated generally, envisioning any and every case of their sort ...” and since this is so, “they aim at permanence,” and “represent legislation.”⁷⁹ This description solidifies Leviticus 5 as a legal text and indicates the seriousness of the role of the witness.

From the perspective of the Hebrew text in BHS, a condition is not readily apparent, since Lev. 5:1 has כִּי־תִשָּׁחַט, *kî-tš-ḥṣā*, when he sins. However, later in the verse, the text uses אִם־לֹא יֵאָדָר, *im'·lô yāg·gîd*, if he does not tell or speak, to describe the witness not speaking in the context of having a testimony regarding someone’s oath or responding to a public proclamation to testify against someone about whom the witness has knowledge.⁸⁰

Brin understands the אִם־לֹא, *im'·lô*, as a formula “entertaining the possibility of non-fulfillment of the obligation entailed in the law in question, and its resultant consequences.”⁸¹ He

⁷⁸ Rolf P. Knierim, "The Problem of Ancient Israel's Prescriptive Legal Traditions," in *Semeia*, ed. Dale Patrick (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1988), 14.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸⁰ There are various ways of understanding the word oath. Milgrom notes that some believe the word refers to a public adjuration, of say a judge, seeking witnesses in a trial. He also notes that others understand the oath to be a blasphemous oath taken by an offender, and the witness does not testify against the blasphemous person, or that the offender fails to keep a sworn oath and the witness knows this, Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 293-294.

⁸¹ Gershon Brin, "The Formula 'If He Shall Not (Do)' and the Problem of Sanctions in Biblical Law," in *Studies in Biblical Law: From the Hebrew Bible to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 52.

further divides the situations in which the *im'·lô* appears into two subcategories. In the first, he argues, “In those cases in which it is required that a person fulfill the instruction of the law in a natural and absolute manner, the clause ... refers to the person’s refusal to carry out the basic law...”⁸² The second subcategory he describes as those cases “which do not involve a mandatory obligation.”⁸³ In this last situation, Brin believes that the refusal to carry out the law in question does not bring about a critical situation, since it is not mandatory.⁸⁴

Lev. 5:1 falls into the first category, where an individual fails to fulfill a mandatory obligation of the law.⁸⁵ Brin also addresses, if only briefly, the formula that also comes after the *im'·lô* later in Lev. 5:1, and that is *וְנָשָׂא אֶת־עוֹנוֹ*, *w'ēnā·sā' āwō·nô'*, “he shall bear his guilt.” The phrase appears regularly in the OT,⁸⁶ however, when combined with the *im'·lô* formula in Leviticus, the result is punishment for failure to follow the law.

Apart from the *im'·lô*, *וְנָשָׂא אֶת־עוֹנוֹ*, *w'ēnā·sā' āwō·nô'*, “he shall bear his guilt,” or very similar formulas,⁸⁷ stands alone often and occurs in legal contexts. One finds the formula in Lev. 16:22, where the scapegoat or Azazel, bears upon itself the guilt of the people. The formula

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Brin also notes that not every single use of the formula falls into his two subcategories, believing that some passages simply outline possibilities to situations that may arise, *ibid.*, 55.

⁸⁵ Contra Rooker, who writes that Lev. 5:1-4 includes four inadvertent sins, but then goes on to describe the situation of a witness refusing to give testimony in terms that seem to deny the situation is inadvertent, Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 117.

⁸⁶ The first appearance of the formula is in Gen. 4:13, where Cain expresses that his guilt is more than he can bear. This Genesis passage presents an interesting scenario. It records Cain’s complaints that God has driven him away from the ground, and that he must hide his face from God and be a wanderer and traveler upon earth. Cain also complains that whoever finds him will kill him. God never denies or relieves Cain’s complaints, particularly the complaint of death. God does not tell Cain that no one will kill him, only that anyone who did would receive vengeance seven-fold. This means that while Cain did not believe he could bear his guilt, he did bear his guilt. Wenham contrasts Cain’s story, and other instances where people bear their own guilt, with those instances where God bears the guilt for the people in an act of forgiveness, such as in Hos. 14:3, or instances where the priests bear the guilt of the people, as in Num. 18:1, Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 108. Wenham does not mention Gen. 18:13, where Abraham asks God to bear the guilt of the sin of Sodom, or to forgive them, but it demonstrates his point.

⁸⁷ For instance, the changing from the singular to plural does not really change the meaning of the formula.

occurs again in Lev. 17:15, 20:17, 20:19, and 20:20. Brin argues, at least in the case of Lev. 17:15, that the punishment formula indicates “divine punishment against the sinner.”⁸⁸

Thus, in Lev. 5:1, the witness bears an obligation to testify concerning what they hear regarding oaths. Failure to do so subjects the witness to punishment. Although the reasons for failing to testify vary, they are not necessarily nefarious, as Douglas notes.⁸⁹

The contingent nature of casuistic law and the role of the witness in such legal proceedings extends into Numbers. In two texts, 5:12-13 and 35:30, one finds the legal role of the witness in the case of a wife who goes astray (commits adultery) and a murderer. Casuistic law in the LXX seems to follow the pattern of the Ἐάν plus the aorist subjunctive, as in Lev. 5:1, and is in Num. 5:12-13, but not in 35:30.

Num. 5:12-15 is part of a long casuistic condition whereby a husband may bring his wife to the priest, to determine if she is faithful. In the first part of the situation, the LXX indicates in 5:12-13 the protasis of the conditional situation, writing, “if the wife of a husband goes astray ...⁹⁰ and the husband does not know it, and she conceals it, her pollution against herself, and

⁸⁸ Brin, “The Formula ‘If He Shall Not (Do)’ and the Problem of Sanctions in Biblical Law,” 57.

⁸⁹ Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 125-126.

⁹⁰ The LXX uses παραβῆν, a form of παραβαίνω, meaning to turn aside. The book of Numbers favors this term for covenant violations or for going beyond the word of the Lord, as it appears more in Numbers than in any other OT book. In Numbers, one can find it here in 5:12-29 (4xs), 14:41, 22:18, 24:13, and 27:14. It is a term of covenant transgression also in Exod. 32:8, Deut. 1:43, Deut. 9:12 (which says the people have been quick to turn from the way, which indicates a righteous path), and Deut. 11:16, among others. One may view it as a general term for transgression. The Hebrew word, a form of שָׁחַת, śḥḥ, is less common, occurring only here in Num. 5:12, 5:19, 5:20, and 5:29, and in Pr. 4:15 and 7:25. Bud notes this as well, Philip J. Budd, *Numbers*. ed. Bruce Metzger, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 64. The LXX does not leave the situation ambiguous, that is, simply saying the woman has gone astray. Although somewhat difficult to translate, it appears that the LXX further describes the transgression by noting, “a man will sleep with her and ejaculate his seed, but she escapes unnoticed.” The BHS is also clear in its description, that the man ejaculates semen, שִׁכְבַּת זָרָע, šik·bāt·zē·rā'. Thus, the situation is clearly one of sexual deviance, or adultery, and the focus upon the man's seed likely stresses the importance of protecting the legal identity of legitimate progeny. The LXX description of “a man” or “some man,” uses the indefinite pronoun τις, which could either indicate the vague nature of the command, i.e. “if any man sleep with her,” or it may indicate the unknown identity of the man, possibly a result of the wife concealing it. If the husband or a witness were to catch both parties, or were to know the identities of both offending parties, the likely outcome is death. If the woman chooses to conceal the identity of the man, both parties might live in this instance.

there is no witness against her...” Num. 5:14 apparently continues the protasis, writing, “...when a spirit of jealousy comes on the husband regarding his wife, and she has polluted herself, or a spirit of jealousy comes on the husband regarding his wife and she has not polluted herself.”

These aspects of the protasis are equally important in the legal case. The second part of the scenario is the apodosis in 5:15, “then the husband shall bring his wife to the priest and present an offering concerning her...”

Since there is no witness, the text describes the woman undergoing a trial by the water of bitterness, which is holy water that the priest mixed with dust, and which she drinks before the Lord having taken an oath. In this way, the woman acts as a witness for or against herself before the Lord. If she is innocent, nothing happens. If she is guilty, her uterus will drop and her womb will discharge (NRSV). This punishment is quite different from a situation where at least two witnesses testify against an adulterer. When one finds two witnesses, as in Deut. 22:22ff, the punishment is death.

The Numbers text amplifies the idea of witness here in a legal sense also by the conclusion to the whole situation in Num. 5:29, where the text records, “This is the law of jealousy...” The Greek word for law, νόμος, is unambiguously a legal term here.

The legal nature of the witness in Numbers is in 35:30 as well. It reads, “If anyone kills another, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses; but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of a single witness.” The NRSV presents the case as one of casuistic law, but the LXX has no such contingency. It simply reads, “All who murder a person ...” The LXX seems to imply a foregone conclusion that the time will come when some among the people of Israel will violate the covenant via murder.

The BHS does not present the situation as conditional either. It reads that a murderer shall die on the mouth (testimony) of witnesses. Again, it assumes violation of the law. That Numbers 35:30 and its witnesses is in a legal context is clear from the preceding verse, 35:29. It reads, “These things shall be a statute and ordinance for you throughout your generations wherever you live.”

הַחֻקִּים, ḥūq·qāh', statute, and מִשְׁפָּטִים, miš·pāt', judgment or ordinance, are unmistakably legal terms in the BHS, as are, δικαίωμα, commandment, requirement, or just regulation,⁹¹ and κρίματος, judgment, decree, or lawsuit,⁹² in the LXX.

Deut. 17:6 is also a foundational text for the legal nature of witnesses in the OT, expanding on the Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers texts. Just as the prohibition against false witnesses is a fundamental stipulation of the covenant in Exod. 20, the first, and seemingly most important, covenant stipulation in Exod. 20:3-5 is, “...you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship ...”

Deut. 17:2-7 indicates that if a man or woman violates the first covenant stipulation by serving other gods and bowing down to them that Israel was to make a “thorough inquiry (17:4).”⁹³ Should the inquiry demonstrate the charges are true, Israel is to stone the person at the

⁹¹ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 249-250; Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 154; Louw and Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 1:426.

⁹² Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 567; Louw and Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 1:363.

⁹³ ἐκζητέω, as several lexicons note, has two primary meanings, “to seek out,” or “to demand an account,” or “to bring charges against,” the latter in apparent legal contexts, Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 180. See also Louw and Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 1:330. BDAG does not use the term “legal” but rather states that ἐκζητέω, in “the judicial

gates of the city. They are to do this on the “evidence of two or three witnesses,” because a person cannot die on the evidence of one witness (17:6).⁹⁴

The Deut. 17 passage firmly establishes the legal role of witnesses, but also introduces the reader to the stipulation of needing two or three witnesses to put a person to death. This first appearance of two witnesses here is significant in that the LXX rendering, *δυσὶν μάρτυσιν*, is identical to John’s use in Rev. 11:3-4.⁹⁵ The purpose of the death is “to purge the evil from among you (17:7),”⁹⁶ ostensibly protecting the purity and righteousness of the community.

Similarly, Deut. 19:15 begins an extensive pericope on witnesses in a legal context, including unjust witnesses. 19:15 begins with the statement, “A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing ... Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained.” A translation of the first portion of verse 15 could read, “One

sense,” means, “to look for in expectation of fixing blame,” Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 302.

⁹⁴ Numbers 35:30 also indicates that a person cannot die on the testimony of one witness, but the passage does not specify how many witnesses, recording only, “the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses...” Brin argues that the two or three witness formulation means “two or more” witnesses and that if more than two or three witnesses present themselves, the court shall hear the cumulative testimony of all the witnesses, Brin, “The use of ‘Or’ (וְ) in Biblical Legal Texts,” 97. Neusner discusses this passage and its role in tractate Sanhedrin-Makkot in the Mishnah, Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: Religious Perspectives*. (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 1999), 80.

⁹⁵ *δυσὶν* in these contexts acts adjectivally, in dative plural masculine form, rather than as an indeclinable numeral, as in other episodes.

⁹⁶ The concluding phrase, “So you shall purge the evil from your midst,” appears to be the legal basis for enacting the death penalty against an individual in the book of Deuteronomy. It is in Deut. 13:6 where Israel must put to death the prophet or diviner who speaks treason against God. It is in Deut. 17:12, in the same co-text as 17:7. One finds it again in Deut. 19:19 in the context of two or three witnesses as well. A curious passage is Deut. 21:9, where one finds the phrase, “purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst,” in the context of finding the dead body of a murdered person to which there are no witnesses to the crime. In this instance, the elders are to break the neck of a heifer that has never plowed, do it in a *wadi* with running water that a farmer has not plowed or worked, and wash their hands over the heifer to absolve them of the shedding of innocent blood. In this case, the heifer suffers the death penalty in lieu of the murderer. Deut. 21:21 proclaims the phrase when a town stones to death a rebellious son who refuses to obey his father and mother. In Deut. 22:21, a town shall stone to death a young woman accused of violating her virginity before laying with her husband, an act the NRSV translates as prostitution. In the same co-text, one finds the phrase again in 22:24, where a town shall stone to death, before the city gates, a man who lies with a young woman, “a virgin already engaged to be married,” because he has “violated his neighbor’s wife (NRSV).” If the woman did not cry out, the town is to stone her as well. Deut. 24:7 proclaims the phrase when stating that a kidnapper of an Israelite, who enslaves and sells another, must die. See also Judg. 20:13. Christensen notes that all of these appearances begin with the same phrase as well, “if there is found,” Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-21:9*, 367.

witness shall not stand up to bear witness against a man for any injustice...”⁹⁷ The former NRSV translation does not capture the sense of standing up, which one could understand potentially as part of a legal proceeding, nor does it capture the word injustice, which is the same as in the above-mentioned Exodus passages.

The Deut. 19 passage is also particularly compelling as influencing John’s use of witnesses in Rev. 11:3-4 because Deut. 19:15 is one of only a few places that uses “two witnesses” together in the near co-text, and thus warrants scrutiny. The LXX reads that one might convict only, “ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ ἐπὶ στόματος τριῶν μαρτύρων σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα,” upon the mouth (testimony) of two witnesses and three witnesses will a word stand.⁹⁸ The rendering of δύο μαρτύρων, two witnesses, is like John’s δυσὶν μάρτυσιν.

This passage is additionally appealing in that it not only includes two witnesses, but it also includes the Greek word, σταθήσεται, a third person singular, future passive indicative form of ἵστημι, to stand. Again, as above, one could translate the LXX of Deut. 19:15, “upon the mouth (testimony) of two witnesses and three witnesses will a word stand.” Rev. 11:4 says, “These (two witnesses) are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.” The word for stand in Rev. 11:4 is ἐστῶτες, a nominative masculine, perfect active participle form of ἵστημι.⁹⁹ Although Deuteronomy refers to the word of the witnesses standing,

⁹⁷ The translation of “stand up” here seems reasonable in the co-text, but the verb ἐμμένω has the sense of standing fast in something, or persevering in something, such as an argument or way of life, Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 195. This same article presents Isa. 8:10 as an example of “standing” in the context of speaking a word against someone, “Speak a word, but it will not stand (NRSV).” Perhaps one could also translate Deut. 19:15, “One witness ...should not stand fast,” but it seems disjointed.

⁹⁸ Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*.

⁹⁹ ἵστημι appears in numerous legal contexts where the accused and accuser stands, the aggrieved stands, witnesses stand, those entering into a covenant stand, see Gen. 17:7-21, Exod. 6:4, Lev. 26:9, Num. 35:12, Deut. 5:31, Deut. 25:8, Deut. 27:13, Deut. 29:10-13, Jos. 17:4, Ps. 108:6, Jdt. 6:16. One also finds it where people stand before the Lord, as in Gen. 18:22, where Abraham stands before the Lord and pleads for Sodom. Moses and Joshua stand at the entrance of tent of meeting (tent of testimony, μαρτυρίου, in Deut. 31:14, and in verse 15, the cloud of the Lord comes and stands at the entrance with them. It is noteworthy that two individuals stand in this context, they stand at

and John has the witnesses, as olive trees and lampstands, standing, the density of words in near co-text is noteworthy.

The Deut. 19 context is also significant in what it adds to the Exod. 20 and 23 passages as one notes above. In Exod. 20 and 23, God commands the Israelites not to be unjust witnesses. However, those chapters say nothing about what might occur should a person violate the covenant and act as an unjust witness. Deut. 19:16-20, continuing the legal discussion of verse 15, addresses this prospect.

Deut. 19:16 (LXX, NRSV), presents the protasis to a conditional sentence, “ἐὰν δὲ καταστῇ μάρτυς ἄδικος κατὰ ἀνθρώπου καταλέγων αὐτοῦ ἀσέβειαν,” “If a malicious witness comes forward to accuse someone of wrongdoing...” In one’s opinion, the NRSV does not properly capture the condition of the situation. Although it includes the word “if,” one prefers the translation of “If an unjust witness might bring...,” which adds the word “might” to demonstrate condition.

If Wallace’s categories for NT conditional sentences has any credibility in the LXX, this conditional sentence is what he terms a third-class condition. A third-class condition exists when ἐὰν occurs in the protasis with a subjunctive mood verb in any tense.¹⁰⁰ Deut. 19:16 possesses ἐὰν, which means “if,” and it occurs with καταστῇ, which is a third person singular aorist active subjunctive verb, meaning “might bring.” In one’s own translation, “if an unjust witness might come against a man, and speak against him.” This third-class condition, according to Wallace, presents the condition as “uncertain of fulfillment, but still likely.”¹⁰¹

the tent of testimony, and the Lord stands with them. One cannot help but wonder about the imagery of this passage with respect to Rev. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 696.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Young, addressing conditional sentences, divides them into two categories, real condition and rhetorical conditions.¹⁰² Young further argues it is up to the exegete to decide, co-textually and contextually, if the condition is real or rhetorical. One believes, given the preponderance of passages addressing unjust witnesses in the OT, that Deut. 19:16 presents a real condition.

Young further divides real conditions into two subcategories, confrontation and projection. In the case of confrontation, these conditions possess an indicative mood verb in the protasis and they present a "...situation or premise that the speaker perceives a person will have to resolve or confront in some fashion."¹⁰³ If one were to use Young's NT categories, the lack of an indicative mood verb in the protasis rules out the confrontational subcategory for Deut. 19:16.

However, Young's second subcategory of real conditions is plausible. In a projection, which Young believes is a protasis with a subjunctive mood, optative mood, or future tense verb, "...the speaker seems to project the situation beyond what is normally expected or experienced."¹⁰⁴ Since Deut. 19:16 contains the subjunctive, it would be a projection, wherein the author assumes that at some point, the issue of an unjust witness will arise.

The apodosis is in Deut. 19:17, where the NRSV translates it, "then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days..." The apodosis, however, does not resolve the matter. It only states that the parties shall appear before the Lord it does not state why this is so or what the outcome of this appearance might be.

This is resolved in 19:18-19 as the pericope pairs the conditional sentence of 19:16-17 with the thoughts of 19:18-19. The NRSV reads, "...and the judges shall make a thorough

¹⁰² Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 227.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 228.

inquiry. If the witness is a false witness, having testified falsely against another, then you shall do to the false witness just as the false witness had meant to do to the other. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.”¹⁰⁵

The resolution is not an easy one to translate due to the clause in 19:18b, which the NRSV begins, “If the witness is a false witness...”¹⁰⁶ The English NRSV indicates that the resolution of the conditions in 19:16-17 depends on the outcome of another conditional sentence with a protasis in 19:18b. However, the LXX does not present a conditional sentence, but rather records, “καὶ ἰδοὺ μάρτυς ἄδικος ἐμαρτύρησεν ἄδικα,” and behold, the false (unjust) witness has testified falsely (unjustly).¹⁰⁷

Instead of a condition, the LXX presents what appears to be the discovery of the judges, before whom the two contradictory witnesses appear. Deut. 19:18b introduces the discovery with the Greek, ἰδοὺ, which, as Bailey writes, resists “easy translation formulas and simple grammatical categorization.”¹⁰⁸

It is not a coincidence, at least in this author’s opinion, that in Deut. 17:4, the seminal legal passage that also leads to the discussion here in Deut. 19, the same καὶ ἰδοὺ construction occurs. There, the LXX records, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀληθῶς γέγονεν τὸ ῥῆμα, which the NRSV translates,

¹⁰⁵ Wells addresses several critics who find Deut. 19:16ff to be hypocritical considering the Deut. 22:22 passage where a husband may falsely accuse his wife of not being a virgin on the night of consummation. He demonstrates the legal nature of both passages and their addressing of different legal issues, Bruce Wells, “Sex, Lies, and Virginal Rape: The Slandered Bride and False Accusation in Deuteronomy,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 1 (2005). Additionally, Carmichael recognizes these passages as part of the *talion* tradition in biblical law, Calum Carmichael, “Biblical Laws of Talion,” *Hebrew Annual Review* 9, (1985): 107-126.

¹⁰⁶ Roth states that the Sumerian laws of Ur-Namma concerning false witnesses also begin with the word, “if,” Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*. ed. Simon B. Parker, Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 14. She also shows that false witnesses were subject to a penalty of fifteen shekels of silver, *ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Ratzan writes that in Graeco-Roman Egypt, judges compelled witnesses to “tell the truth,” without, “making it pleasing to anyone,” David M. Ratzan, “Contract Norms and Contract Enforcement in Graeco-Roman Egypt” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2011), 113.

¹⁰⁸ Nicholas Andrew Bailey, “Thetic Constructions in Koine Greek: With Special Attention to Clauses εἰμί 'be', γίνομαι 'occur', ἔρχομαι 'come', ἰδοὺ/ἴδε 'behold', and complement clauses of ὁράω 'see'” (Ph.D. diss., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2009), 314.

“and the charge is proved true.” One translates it, “and behold, this thing has truly come to pass.”

In both cases, the καὶ ἰδοὺ indicates the findings of those making a legal or juridical inquiry.

Some observations about ἰδοὺ are helpful here. First, Bailey, following others, points out that ἰδοὺ appears often in narrative, which is the case in Deut. 17:4 and 19:18b, although it is legal narrative. In the NT at least, he also notes, following Fiedler, that καὶ ἰδοὺ gives narrative a “religious sound” that “underscores key events and introductions ... as well as statements of theological substance.”¹⁰⁹

Again, while recognizing that Bailey focuses only on the NT,¹¹⁰ he separates all the appearances of καὶ ἰδοὺ into five categories. The uses here in Deut. 17 and 19, fall into what he calls his C5 category (categories numbered 1-5, C1, C2, etc.). This category finds the καὶ ἰδοὺ near the beginning of a clause and contains an element of emotion, rooted in the context, in pointing the reader or hearer to focus their mental attention on the clause that follows the καὶ ἰδοὺ.¹¹¹ The co-text and context of a C5 use of καὶ ἰδοὺ contain what one might interpret as the feeling of surprise, but in general, the co-text may present some indication of emotion, perhaps even strong emotion.¹¹²

In both Deut. 17 and 19, one is inclined to believe that there is, in fact, a strong emotional expression in the text.¹¹³ There is a contrast in both passages between the unjust or false accusation of the witness and the true findings of the judge that the witness is false. One believes

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 316; Peter Fiedler, *Die Formel 'und siehe' im Neuen Testament*. (München: Kösel Verlag, 1969), 81.

¹¹⁰ Although he rightly admits the phrase comes from the LXX, Bailey, "Thetic Constructions in Koine Greek: With Special Attention to Clauses εἰμί 'be', γίνομαι 'occur', ἔρχομαι 'come', ἰδοὺ/ἴδε 'behold', and complement clauses of ὁράω 'see'", 317.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 320.

¹¹² Ibid., 321.

¹¹³ Naturally, in the absence of the author and any original language speakers, one may only speculate.

there is intense irony in the juridical nature of both texts. Amid a careful inquiry regarding a false witness, the only true thing one discovers is that the witness is, in fact, false.

The only use of a form of *μάρτυς* in the book of Joshua appears in 24:22 and there it is associated with following the covenant, and thus a legal text. While the previous passages on witness relate specifically to instances of apodictic and casuistic law as they relate to the covenant, Joshua's use of witness relates broadly to the larger covenant relationship with God.

Immediately prior to his death, at least in the narrative strategy of the author, Joshua says to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve Him." Butler believes in this instance that, "Joshua assumes the role of judge and swears Israel in as witnesses against herself."¹¹⁴

While it is difficult to draw a conclusion based on a single word, Joshua's use of *λατρεύω* for "serve/worship" is the same word in Exod. 20:5, where Moses commands the people not to serve, or worship, false gods. Since Joshua is exhorting the people to put away foreign gods, it would seem his exhortation to serve God, rather than the foreign gods, relates to Israel's covenantal requirement to do so.¹¹⁵ As Joshua's context is covenantal, is it legal in nature.

The co-text of the LXX reinforces the legal nature of Israel's witness against itself in Jos. 24:25-26. Joshua makes a covenant with the people, presumably reinforcing or renewing the one

¹¹⁴ Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*. ed. John D. W. Watts, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 276.

¹¹⁵ Hamilton points out that the word for "serve" appears fourteen times in Josh. 24:14-24, Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 81. One presumes Hamilton is referring to the BHS, where עבד, 'bd, appears fourteen times. All the appearances contrast how Israel's ancestors served foreign gods beyond the river in Egypt, and now they must serve the Lord. This contrast extends back to Josh. 22:27, 23:7, 23:16, and 24:2 as well. The conclusion of the book in 24:31 includes the summary, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua..." The LXX uses *λατρεύω*, a far less common word in Greek than is עבד in Hebrew, occurring thirteen times in the same verses.

Israel made with Moses, and Joshua gives them the law, νόμον, and judgments, κρίσιν, in front of the tent of meeting in Shilo.¹¹⁶ One has already established that these are legal words.

If this were not enough, Joshua writes these things in the Book of Law of God, and sets up a stone to serve as a witness, μαρτύριον, against Israel, which Joshua “stood up”, ἔστησεν, an aorist indicative form of ἵστημι, by the terebinth in front of the Lord.¹¹⁷ The stone serves as a witness because it heard all the words of the Lord.

Howard Jr., following Mendenhall, sees the Joshua passage as reflecting a Hittite suzerain/vassal treaty, where God is the suzerain and Israel is the vassal.¹¹⁸ He articulates the basic structure of such a covenant as containing a “preamble,” which “identifies the author of the covenant.” There is “a historical prologue,” which “describes the previous relationship between two parties,” and the “stipulations,” which are “the vassal’s obligations to the overlord.” There are also requirements for depositing the record of the covenant in the temple and arrangements for the “periodic public reading” of the record. The suzerain vassal treaty must have witnesses, who, in the case of the Hittite treaties, are the gods. Finally, there are “Curses and blessings,” indicating “the gods will punish or bless, depending on whether the covenant is kept.”¹¹⁹ Within

¹¹⁶ Ralph’s LXX reads Shilo, while the BHS reads Shechem. Butler notes this, and believes this is due to the tradition of the tabernacle at Shiloh in Josh. 18:1, Butler, *Joshua*, 265. Hamilton believes the association here with Shechem links Joshua’s purpose with the patriarchs in several stories of Genesis. In Gen. 12:6-7, Abram builds an altar in Shechem. Gen. 33:18-20 has Jacob, in meeting Esau, purchasing land in Shechem and building an altar. Later, in Gen. 35:2, prior to leaving Shechem for Bethel, Jacob tells his household, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your clothes...” Jacob then hides these foreign gods under the oak near Shechem in Gen. 35:4. Hamilton sees Joshua’s command to put away foreign gods and the standing up of a large stone as a witness under the oak near the sanctuary as parallel actions to Jacob’s at Shechem, Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books*, 79.

¹¹⁷ BHS has a large tree at the sanctuary of Yahweh.

¹¹⁸ David M. Howard Jr., *Joshua*. ed. E. Ray Clendenen, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 426; George E. Mendenhall and Gary A. Herion, s.v. “Covenant.” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1179-1202.

¹¹⁹ Howard Jr., *Joshua*, 426.

this structure of Joshua's covenant renewal with Israel, both the people (v. 22), and the stone (v. 27) stand as witnesses against Israel.¹²⁰

This is not to say that Joshua 24 contains all the above elements. Howard Jr. states that Joshua 24 is a report of a covenant and not the text of a covenant, which accounts for the missing elements.¹²¹ The author does not intend to include all the elements because they are not necessary in recording the report.

Weinfeld, in his discussion of OT covenants, sees two types of covenants with God, the "obligatory," and the "promissory."¹²² He relates these two covenants to "Two types of judicial documents ... in the Mesopotamian cultural sphere from the middle of the second millennium onwards..."¹²³ These documents are "the political treaty ... from the Hittite empire," and "the royal grant ... in the Babylonian ... documents."¹²⁴

While both judicial documents contain similar structural elements, those that Howard Jr. and Mendenhall outline above, Weinfeld argues that these documents have significant functional differences. In the treaty, which is equivalent to the obligatory covenant, the vassal is obligated to the suzerain, whereas in the grant, the suzerain is obligated to the vassal. Moreover, the treaty protects the rights of the suzerain, whereas the grant protects the rights of the vassal.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Ibid., 427. Joshua erecting a stone as a witness is not the first time that inanimate objects serve as a witness in Joshua. For instance, in Josh. 22:26, the Reubenites and Gadites build an altar to serve as a witness between themselves and the rest of Israel to ensure that they have a portion in the Lord. In Josh. 24:31, the section concludes with the Reubenites and Gadites naming the altar "Witness." The word for witness in these instances is not *μαρτύς* but *μαρτύριον*. The LXX of Joshua also writes of twelve stone that Joshua "stood up" in Josh. 4, when he took one stone for each of the tribes of Israel to commemorate the crossing of the Jordan River on dry ground. The LXX does not call those stones witnesses however, but rather, a sign (Josh. 4:6), *σημεῖον*, and a memorial or memory, *μνημόσυνον* (4:7).

¹²¹ Ibid., 428.

¹²² Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90, no. 2 (April-June 1970): 184.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 185.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Weinfeld sees God's covenants with Abraham and David as promissory and in the realm of the royal grant. In a grant, the suzerain bestows gifts on a servant for previous loyalty. In this way, Weinfeld sees God bestowing gifts upon Abraham and David because of their previous loyalty.¹²⁶ Weinfeld writes that the treaty, rather than rewarding past loyalty, is an "inducement for future loyalty."¹²⁷

Although Weinfeld does not directly address the situation in Joshua 24, one is inclined to see the covenant Joshua outlines in Josh. 24 as part of the obligatory/treaty document. The covenant report, and the calling of witnesses, or swearing in of witnesses, reflects the judicial nature of the report. One is also inclined to see Joshua 24 as part of an inducement for future loyalty, although this is not certain.

This is because the LXX's language may reflect not an inducement, but rather an indictment. Josh 24:27 may read, "This (stone) will be a witness among you at the last day when you should deal falsely with the Lord my God." Although the text uses the future middle indicative, ἔσται, will be, the inducement aspect seems lost considering the use of "when you should deal falsely," ἥνίκα ἐὰν ψεύσῃσθε.

This text is difficult with regard to a future inducement because ἥνίκα is a temporal particle that, appearing with ἐὰν and an aorist subjunctive, ψεύσῃσθε, deal falsely, can mean "at the time," "when," or "every time that."¹²⁸ If one translates it in this way, it seems to remove any idea of an inducement to loyalty and instead proclaims a future situation where Israel will turn away from God and in that day, or at that time, the stone will stand as a witness against the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 439. Gow, beginning in Ruth 4:5, assumes this is a precise legal context, Murray D. Gow, "Ruth *Queque* -- A Coquette? (Ruth 4:5)," *Tyndale Bulletin* 41, no. 2 (1990).

people.¹²⁹ If there is an inducement, it is perhaps by way of a warning. Regardless, Joshua 24:22 continues the juridical nature of witness in the OT.

Μάρτυς appears three times in Ruth, all within the same context of chapter 4. In Ruth 4:9-11, the man Boaz, a resident of Bethlehem in Judah, agrees to acquire Ruth as his wife. He removes his sandal and presents it to his neighbor, or kinsman/relative redeemer, at the city gate, as a part of a ritual to acquire Ruth.¹³⁰ The LXX of Ruth 4:7, which precedes this act, indicates that this is a legal matter, declaring that the process of such an acquisition to be δικαίωμα, an ordinance, commandment, or custom.¹³¹

The juristic sense of the text also comes from the phrase, στήσαι πᾶν λόγον, to make stand/stand up the word. στήσαι is a form of ἵστημι, to stand up, a word one has already established as associated with the concept of witness in previous texts. Boaz unties his sandal and offers it to his neighbor/relative as a means of making the words they exchange stand up, presumably as a kind of witness.¹³²

¹²⁹ The same construction of ἡνίκα ἐάν with an aorist subjunctive is in Josh. 24:20, where Joshua says, “When you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and do you harm (eclectic translation).” It reinforces the LXX assertion that Joshua knows the people will turn away.

¹³⁰ Hubbard Jr. understands the use of the word kinsman-redeemer as a legal term in biblical law, Robert L. Hubbard Jr., “The Go’el in Ancient Israel: Theological Reflections on an Israelite Institution,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1, (1991): 13-18. A general overview of the book of Ruth and its legal context is Derek R.G. Beattie, “The Book of Ruth as Evidence for Israelite Legal Practice,” *Vetus Testamentum* 24, no. 3 (1974): 251-267. Berlin and Grossman are unconvinced of the actual historicity of Ruth, believing it to be a fictionalized account that serves as a metaphor for exiled Israel, Adele Berlin and Maxine L. Grossman, “Legal Fiction: Levirate cum Land Redemption in Ruth,” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 1, no. 1 (May 2010): 3-18.

¹³¹ There is no equivalent word in the BHS. Wetter believes this passage is both a local custom, and a civil court matter, affirming its legal status. She argues this from the phrase “I acquired for myself Ruth, the Moabite,” among other textual clues, Anne-Mareike Wetter, *On Her Account: Reconfiguring Israel in Ruth, Esther, and Judith*. T&T Clark Library of Biblical Studies (London; Oxford; New York; New Delhi; Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2015), 44.

¹³² Block too sees the actions here in Ruth as legal. The BHS of 4:7 reads, “This was formerly the custom in Israel for redemption and the transfer of property...” Block indicates the use of, תְּמִוְרָה, tēmûrāh, transfer of property, “has to do with legal attestation of a transfer of goods and rights,” Daniel Isaac Block, *Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 718. Bush, following Brichto, believes the words for “redemption,” and transfer of property,” are a hendiadys or merism, covering “all forms of transactions,” Fredric W. Bush, *Ruth, Esther*. ed. John D. W. Watts, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 234.

As Boaz begins to express this act of acquiring Ruth before the elders and all the people, he begins his speech by saying in 4:9, “μαρτυρες υμεεις σήμερον,” “Today you are witnesses,” and he ends the same speech in 4:10 the same way. The phrase, “Today you are witnesses forms a short *inclusio* emphasizing all that Boaz had acquired as part of the legal transition, which includes the property of Elimelech, Ruth’s father-in-law, and all the property of Elimelech’s sons, one of whom, Mahlon, was Ruth’s deceased first husband.¹³³ Boaz takes Ruth as his wife “to maintain the dead man’s name on his inheritance.”¹³⁴

The elders and people at the gate to whom Boaz speaks reply, “We are witnesses...” and Bush sees this as an affirmation of the people to “certify and attest the performance and validity of the transaction.”¹³⁵ Taken together, there are several reasons for thinking Ruth 4 is a legal text and the use of witnesses in this text supports again that when witnesses appear, it is in a legal context.

In the poetic and wisdom texts of the Psalms and Proverbs, several passages reflect the legal nature of witness that one discusses to this point. Without going into detail, Ps. 26:12 (27:12 in NRSV) and Ps. 34:11 (35:11 in NRSV), both lament the hazard and danger that false witnesses pose to life.¹³⁶

¹³³ One can also observe questions surrounding property inheritance or property disputes regarding a widow’s rights in Egyptian law as well. Haring writes of the widow Urnero winning a case regarding her husband’s property. When she passed this property to her son, Huy, he also died, leaving behind his wife Nubnofret. Nubnofret lost a subsequent challenge to the land, Ben Haring, “Administration and Law: Pharaonic,” in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, ed. Allan B. Lloyd, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 230-231. That a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are involved in legal issues of property after the death of their husbands is similar to the Ruth narrative.

¹³⁴ Bush, citing Tucker writes that the repetition of the phrase, “Today you are witnesses,” functions as part of a “notarial function,” that is, this was an oral legal transaction, rather than a written transaction, Bush, *Ruth, Esther*, 238; Gene M. Tucker, “Witnesses and ‘Dates’ in Israelite Contracts,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (January 1966): 42-44.

¹³⁵ Bush, *Ruth, Esther*, 238.

¹³⁶ One uses the term lament in its technical, poetic sense of complaint. In describing later, 5th Century A.D. Christian funeral practices, Hughes, contra Craigie (royal psalm), assumes Psalm 26 is a lament, Richard A. Hughes, *Lament, Death, and Destiny*. Studies in Biblical Literature (New York; Washington D.C./Baltimore; Bern; Frankfurt am Main; Berlin; Brussels; Vienna; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2004), 73; Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*. ed. Bruce

As one demonstrates in the chart above, no OT text contains more references to *μάρτυς*, witness, than Proverbs, at ten.¹³⁷ In one's opinion, the concept of witness here in OT wisdom literature plays an important role in tying the Proverbs to the covenant language of Israel, and in furthering the legal sense of witness throughout the OT corpus.¹³⁸

The references in Proverbs all occur in the context of parallelisms, with antithetical parallelisms being the most common,¹³⁹ then synonymous, and finally synthetic. In a series of similar antithetical parallels, Prov. 12:17, 12:19, 14:5, 14:25, 21:28, all contrast the wickedness of false witnesses with the wisdom of telling the truth, or being a truthful witness.¹⁴⁰

The passages in Proverbs 14 are important in that they contain similar constructions to John's depiction of Jesus as *ὁ μάρτυς, ὁ πιστός*, the faithful witness in Rev. 1:5 and 3:14. Prov. 14:5 reads, *μάρτυς πιστός οὐ ψεύδεται*, "... a faithful witness does not lie." Line 1 is the thesis to the antithesis of line 2 in 14:5, which reads, *ἐκκαίει δὲ ψεύδε μάρτυς ἄδικος*, "... a false witness breathes [inflames] lies."

Metzger, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 231. Craigie will only commit to calling Psalm 34 LXX (Psalm 35 NRSV), a lament Psalm in general terms, while specifically labeling it a royal psalm, *ibid.*, 282. Tournay includes Psalm 35 among his lament Psalms, Raymond Jacques Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms: The Prophetic Liturgy of the Second Temple in Jerusalem*. trans., J. Edward Crowley, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 163.

¹³⁷ Wilson notes the prevalence in Proverbs for condemning deceit and false witness, writing, "False witness is emphatically condemned in the book of Proverbs," Walter T. Wilson, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*. ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck et al., Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 91.

¹³⁸ Waltke notes that for long periods in OT studies, scholars did not believe Proverbs reflected the language of covenant and election, Bruce K. Waltke, "The Book of Proverbs and Old Testament Theology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136, (Oct.-Dec. 1979): 302-304. It is hard to read the numerous texts on false witness in Proverbs and not see Exod. 20:16, so too Murphy, who calls the legal connection with Exod. 20:16 "obvious," Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*. ed. Bruce Metzger, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 103.

¹³⁹ Krašovec argues that antithesis is fundamentally Hebrew and is a part of what separates Israel from her Mesopotamian neighbors in antiquity, Krašovec, "The Poetic and Narrative Shape of the Hebrew Bible and Literary Forms of Antithesis," 32-33.

¹⁴⁰ Hildebrandt offers a detailed analysis of antithetic parallelism in Proverbs 10-15, arguing it serves as double motivation for following the Lord, offering a positive and a negative or dissuasive motive, Ted Hildebrandt, "Motivation and Antithetic Parallelism in Proverbs 10-15," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 4 (December 1992): 438-439.

Prov. 14:25 is also of interest in this study since it reads, “ρύσεται ἐκ κακῶν ψυχὴν μάρτυς πίστος,” a truthful/faithful witness rescues the soul from evil. The NRSV translates the text as, “A truthful witness saves lives.” It is one of the few places that the words faithful/truthful witness appear in near co-text. Garrett understands this verse in a legal sense, writing that court proceedings are in view.¹⁴¹

In Prov. 14:5 and 14:25, both the noun, μάρτυς, and the adjective, πίστος, are anarthrous, causing difficulty in determining whether the construction is attributive or predicative.¹⁴² However, from the context and parallelisms, one believes the construction in these two verses is what Wallace labels as the fourth attributive position.¹⁴³ This means one translates the text as the faithful witness, rather than the witness is faithful.¹⁴⁴

Prov. 19:5 is a synonymous parallelism regarding the false witness. The NRSV records, “A false witness will not go unpunished, and a liar will not escape.” A similar synonymous parallel occurs a few verses later in 19:9, where “A false witness will not go unpunished, and the liar will perish.” Prov. 24:28 is also a synonymous parallelism, “Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, and do not deceive with your lips.”

A synthetic parallelism occurs in Prov. 6:19, where a lying witness who testifies falsely is the sixth of seven things that the Lord hates. The seventh, one who sows discord in a family, is the completion of the synthetic parallelism.

¹⁴¹ Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 145. Reyburn and Fry see this Proverb as referring to a trial witness, William David Reyburn and Euan McGregor Fry, *A Handbook on Proverbs*. UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 320.

¹⁴² Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 309.

¹⁴³ Again, this assumes that NT Greek constructs have meaning for the Greek Old Testament, *ibid.*, 310.

¹⁴⁴ Robertson also notes that adjectives may be attributive even in the absence of the article, Archibald T. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*. Third ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1919), 656.

A similar proverb exists in Sumerian literature, which reads, “(He who says:) ‘Let me tell you about it,’ when he knows nothing, and comes forward as a witness in a case he knows nothing about, is an abomination to Suen.”¹⁴⁵ An early Sumerian proverb, portending to be from the Sumerian ruler Shuruppak to his son Ziusudra, goes further, saying, “Do not appear as a witness in a dispute.”¹⁴⁶

Prophetic literature¹⁴⁷ has surprisingly few references to μάρτυς, given the role of the prophets in mediating the legal terms of the Sinai covenant.¹⁴⁸ Throughout the OT, there are circumstances in which Israel violates the term of the Sinai covenant (Exodus 19:4ff) that God

¹⁴⁵ Gertrud Farber, "Sumerian Canonical Compositions," in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo (Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997), 566.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 569.

¹⁴⁷ One is aware of the varying canons regarding which books fall under the category of prophets. For the purpose of this work, the protestant canon of prophets is in view, or what many authors call the latter prophets, e.g. Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*. (New York: Association Press, 1961), x. This decision is more generic than anything, given the proliferation of oracles and poetry in the narrative prose, rather than the historical narrative of the former prophets. One is also aware that the order of the books in the canons differs. Arguments for or against these varying canons and the order of their books is beyond this work. However, one does think that some scholars, such as Goswell, may overreach in their implications regarding the order of the prophetic books in the Greek Old Testament. Goswell argues, regarding Vaticanus, that since the prophetic books appear at the end of the canon, this implies prophecy is mainly foretelling, Greg Goswell, "The Order of the Books in the Greek Old Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52, no. 3 (September 2009): 459-460. This is, contrary to Goswell's own words there, a "tendentious reading." He makes no effort to connect the prophets to their legal role regarding the covenant, something which Schnabel notes is an important consideration in canon discussions, Eckhard Schnabel, "History, Theology and the Biblical Canon: an Introduction to Basic Issues," *Themelios* 20, no. 2 (1995): 16. Regardless, one is aware of the distinction between the "theory of the canon," and the "history of the canon," as Leonard notes, Richard C. Leonard, "The Origin of Canonicity in the Old Testament" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1972), 1.

¹⁴⁸ For instance, Matthews defines the prophetic role as, "...to challenge the establishment and the social order, to remind the leadership and the people of their obligation to the covenant with Yahweh..." Victor H. Matthews, *The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World: An Introduction*. Second ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 19. Nicholson's definition is similar, where he defines the role of the prophet was, "to summon Israel to repentance and obedience to the *torah*..." Ernest Nicholson, "Deuteronomy 18.9-22, The Prophets and Scripture," in *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel*, ed. John Day, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2010), 151. Lenzi points out that in Neo-Assyrian texts, prophets delivered their prophecies publicly, "with a witness standing alongside, or in public ritual contexts," Alan Lenzi, "Revisiting Biblical Prophecy, Revealed Knowledge Pertaining to Ritual, and Secrecy in Light of Ancient Mesopotamian Prophetic Texts," in *Divination, Politics, & Ancient Near Eastern Empires*, ed. Alan Lenzi and Jonathon Stökl, Ancient Near Eastern Monographs (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature), 73.

made with them, and thus, God, as the suzerain, accuses Israel of legal violation of the covenant through the prophets.¹⁴⁹

In Isaiah 8:2, God tells Isaiah to take a large tablet, write upon it concerning the coming Assyrian invasion, and make a witness or witnesses, that is, faithful men, *μάρτυράς μοι ποιήσον πιστούς ἀνθρώπους*. The content of the writing is short, “Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz.”¹⁵⁰

The text continues, revealing that the faithful men who are to serve as witnesses to this tablet are Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah (LXX has Berechiah). The BHS records that these witnesses are trustworthy or reliable. One could also translate the LXX here as “make for me witnesses, men that are faithful.” That there are two witnesses in the end is interesting, considering John’s use of two witnesses in Revelation 11.

The syntax of the LXX indicates that the words *μάρτυράς*, witness, *πιστούς*, faithful, and *ἀνθρώπους*, men, are in relationship to one another. The question is the nature of the relationship. Since both *μάρτυράς* and *ἀνθρώπους* are identical in case, gender, and number, one believes they are standing in apposition to one another. That is, the second noun in the accusative case clarifies, or further identifies, the first noun in the accusative case.¹⁵¹ If this is true, the noun “men” further identifies the nature of the witness.

The adjective *πιστούς*, faithful, further clarifies the appositive noun for men, *ἀνθρώπους*. Given the syntax of *πιστούς ἀνθρώπους*, where the adjective precedes the noun, the question arises as to whether this is an attributive or a predicative relationship. Using Wallace’s numbered

¹⁴⁹ Waltke writes that the prophets interpret Israel’s historical failures “as due to her covenant infidelity,” Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 805.

¹⁵⁰ Chisholm, among others, notes the symbolism of the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, meaning quick to the spoils or plunder. The name, given to the child conceived in Isa. 8:3 between Isaiah and the prophetess, symbolizes the coming Assyrian destruction, Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 34.

¹⁵¹ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 199.

positions regarding the differing possibilities of adjectives in relation to nouns, this construction could be a first attributive or a first predicate relationship.¹⁵²

In such cases in the NT, where the exact nature of an anarthrous adjective noun construction is ambiguous, one determines the relationship based on co-text and context. The co-text and context of the LXX do not favor the first anarthrous attributive position over the first anarthrous predicate position.¹⁵³ However, given the BHS, where faithful is in a construct relationship with witness, it is likely this is a first anarthrous attributive position, thus, faithful men.

The two witnesses, Uriah and Zechariah, are witnesses to God's word of impending judgment against the people of Israel. In this way, they serve as witnesses in God's covenant lawsuit against Israel for their unfaithfulness,¹⁵⁴ and one could see this passage as legal in nature.

Isaiah 43:9-12 is one of the densest sections in biblical literature regarding *μάρτυς*, equal to Deut. 19 in containing five references to the word within four verses.¹⁵⁵ However, these dense references to witness occur within a slightly larger poem, which ranges from Isa. 43:8-13. For the sake of reference, given the large number of verses, one includes here the entirety of the section from the NRSV translation of Isa. 43:8-13, along with Rahlfs LXX.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Ibid., 309-310.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 310.

¹⁵⁴ Smith argues these are hostile witnesses, which makes them credible even to Isaiah's enemies, Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*. ed. E. Ray Clendenen, New American Commentary (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2007), 221.

¹⁵⁵ This text falls into an apparently controversial setting regarding audience. Smith notes the debate as to whether one should understand Isaiah 40-55 in an exilic context or not. The conclusion is unimportant for this dissertation, but one may find Smith's discussion interesting, Gary V. Smith, "Isaiah 40-55: Which Audience Was Addressed?," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 54, no. 4 (December 2011).

¹⁵⁶ Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*.

<p>⁸ Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!</p>	<p>⁸ καὶ ἐξήγαγον λαὸν τυφλόν, καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ εἰσιν ὡσαύτως τυφλοί, καὶ κωφοὶ τὰ ὦτα ἔχοντες.</p>
<p>⁹ Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble. Who among them declared this, and foretold to us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to justify them, and let them hear and say, “It is true.”</p>	<p>⁹ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη συνήχθησαν ἅμα, καὶ συναχθήσονται ἄρχοντες ἐξ αὐτῶν, τίς ἀναγγελεῖ ταῦτα; ἢ τὰ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τίς ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν; ἀγαγέτωσαν τοὺς μάρτυρας αὐτῶν καὶ δικαιωθήτωσαν καὶ εἰπάτωσαν ἀληθῆ.</p>
<p>¹⁰ You are my witnesses, says the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.</p>	<p>¹⁰ γένεσθέ μοι μάρτυρες, καὶ γὰρ μάρτυς, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, καὶ ὁ παῖς, ὃν ἐξελεξάμην, ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ πιστεύσητε καὶ συνῆτε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι, ἔμπροσθέν μου οὐκ ἐγένετο ἄλλος θεὸς καὶ μετ’ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔσται,</p>
<p>¹¹ I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.</p>	<p>¹¹ ἐγὼ ὁ θεός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν πᾶρεξ ἐμοῦ σῶζων.</p>
<p>¹² I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the LORD.</p>	<p>¹² ἀνήγγειλα καὶ ἔσωσα, ὠνείδισα καὶ οὐκ ἦν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀλλότριος, ὑμεῖς ἐμοὶ μάρτυρες καὶ γὰρ μάρτυς, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός.</p>
<p>¹³ I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it?</p>	<p>¹³ ἔτι ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν μου ἐξαιρούμενος, ποιήσω, καὶ τίς ἀποστρέψει αὐτό;</p>

In 43:9, God calls the nations to send forth their witnesses to hear that what God has done, his prediction of Cyrus’ rise to power, is true.¹⁵⁷ Having indicated that the nations shall

¹⁵⁷ Chisholm, writing of God gathering the nations together, states that God “expects them to testify of his greatness and his superiority to the gods of the nations,” Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets*, 103.

send their witnesses, God casts himself and Israel as witnesses as well in Isa. 43:10LXX saying, “You are my witnesses, and I am witness.” The LXX says Israel and God are witnesses that God is the ἐγώ εἰμι, “I am.”¹⁵⁸ The NRSV has “I am he.” Isa. 43:10 NRSV also adds, “Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.”

The Greek of this last line of Isa. 43:10, different from the NRSV, is telling, καὶ μετ’ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔσται, “besides me none exist.” The use of ἐμὲ rather than μὲ, is emphatic, reading, “besides ME none exist.”¹⁵⁹ The emphatic use of the first person personal pronoun occurs in verses 11 and 12 as well.

Isa. 43:11 NRSV continues the theme of 43:10, saying, “I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.” The LXX of 43:11 reads, ἐγὼ ὁ θεός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν πάρεξ ἐμοῦ σῶζων, “I [am] God, and none exist except ME, the one who saves.” ἐμοῦ, me, is emphatic, as opposed to the standard form μου.

Isa. 43:12 NRSV concludes the witness section, reading, “I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the Lord.”¹⁶⁰ The last section of the sentence from the LXX reads, ὑμεῖς ἐμοὶ μάρτυρες καὶ ἐγὼ μάρτυς, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, “You to ME are witnesses, and I am witness, says the Lord God.” ἐμοὶ is an emphatic form of the pronoun, whereas the standard form is μοι.

One believes that Isa. 43:10-13 is a small chiasm, shaped by parallels, that intends to highlight to what it is that God and Israel bear witness. Isa. 43:10 contrasts the witnesses of the nations with Israel, who is God’s witness, recording God as saying, γένεσθέ μοι μάρτυς, “You are

¹⁵⁸ This appears to be a reference to the LXX translation of Exod. 3:14, where God reveals the divine name to Moses, saying, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν, “I am the one who exists,” or “I am the one who is.”

¹⁵⁹ William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar*. Third ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 98.

¹⁶⁰ Although it is insignificant for the conclusions here, Goldingay briefly discusses the Hebrew of this verse in John Goldingay, “Isaiah 43:22-28,” *Zeitschrift für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 110, no. 2 (1998): 176.

my witnesses (NRSV),” or the LXX has, “You became my witness,” indicating the singular, rather than the plural form of witness. God refers to Israel in the singular as witness. The LXX also adds, *καὶ γὰρ μάρτυς*, “and I am witness,” including God as an additional witness. Israel and God bear witness that, “Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me (Isa. 43:10 NRSV).”

In Isa. 43:12, the NRSV and LXX repeat, “You are my witnesses,” *ὕμεῖς ἐμοὶ μάρτυρες*. Again, the LXX adds the additional *καὶ γὰρ μάρτυς*, “and I am witness,” adding that God calls himself as witness as well. As one can tell, Isa. 43:10 and 43:12 are not exact in their wording, but the idea is similar. Whereas in Isa. 43:10, God includes Israel as a singular witness, that is, the entire nation is one witness, in Isa. 43:12, God uses the plural of witness, saying you are my witnesses. Moreover, Isa. 43:12 uses *ἐμοὶ* rather than the *μοι* of 43:10. *ἐμοὶ* is an emphatic form of the first person personal pronoun, indicating that God says, “You are MY witnesses.”¹⁶¹ Since God has just declared that no other gods exist, one can understand the emphasis.

As the end of Isa. 43:10 declares that God is, “I am,” Isa. 43:11 declares the same sentiment, but without an exact parallel. It reads, “I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior (NRSV).”

The potential chiasm would then have Isa. 43:11 as its center. With repeated phrases in 43:10 and 12, the end of 10 and the whole of 11 are parallel. The statements at the end of 10, the entirety of 11, and then verse 13, are all three in parallel. The structure might look something like:

γένεσθέ μοι μάρτυς – You became my witness (43:10)

καὶ γὰρ μάρτυς -- and I am witness (43:10)

¹⁶¹ Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar*, 98.

ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι, ἔμπροσθέν μου οὐκ ἐγένετο ἄλλος θεὸς καὶ μετ' ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔσται –
That I am, before me no other gods existed, and beside me, none will exist
(43:10)

ἐγὼ ὁ θεός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν πᾶρεξ ἐμοῦ σῳζών – I am God, and none exist
besides Me, the one who saves (43:11)¹⁶²

ὕμεῖς ἐμοὶ μάρτυρες – You are my witnesses (43:12)

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ μάρτυς – and I am witness (43:12)

ἔτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν μου ἐξαιρούμενος -- even from
the beginning, none exists that can deliver from my hand (43:13)¹⁶³

It is evident that the focus of these verses in the LXX is to affirm that there is only one God, and that Israel and God bear witness to this fact, and the witnesses of the nations will realize this truth as well.

Although writing from the perspective of the Hebrew Bible, Watts sees these verses as a continuation of a long running trial of Yahweh against Israel for her idolatry, beginning at least as far back as Isa. 41:21, in which Yahweh calls many witnesses, including “The coastlands and

¹⁶² The appearance of the anarthrous nominative singular participle, σῳζών, the one who saves, at the end of the sentence, is vexing. Anarthrous participles are at times difficult to distinguish, as to whether they are attributive, predicate, or periphrastic constructions. The appearance of the verb ἔστιν compounds this difficulty as it expands the possibilities of categorization regarding periphrastic and predicative uses. This is also difficult since most discussions of biblical Greek focus on the NT not the LXX and the categories may not be exact. That said, one's first instinct was to label this is a predicate position adjectival participle, due to its appearance at the end of the sentence, its anarthrous construction, and its agreement in case, gender, and number with ὁ θεός, which is a predicate in the first part of the sentence. However, one concludes it is likely either an attributive participle, further modifying ἐγὼ or ὁ θεός, or, more likely, a substantival use of the attributive, due to its lack of grammatical connection with the sentence. The appeal of the substantive use stems from Boyer, who describes the use of the substantive participle when it stands alone, James L. Boyer, "The Classification of Participles: A Statistical Study," *Grace Theological Journal* 5, no. 2 (1984): 167. One ruled out the nominative absolute participle since it did not appear at the beginning of the sentence. See Wallace's discussion on the difficulty of classifying participles in Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 612-655; 758-760. Runge, whose discourse grammar approach often clarifies, nuances, or disagrees with Wallace, does not discuss the role of adjectival participles, attributive or substantive, but instead focuses on circumstantial or adverbial participles, Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*, 243ff.

¹⁶³ For assistance in the English translation of some of the constructions of these verses, one used Tan and deSilva, *The Lexham Greek-English Interlinear Septuagint*. The Lexham Interlinear draws most of its definitions from Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*.

borderlands.”¹⁶⁴ However, Watts also writes that this trial is more like a public hearing or an inquiry.¹⁶⁵

Heffelfinger, also addressing the Hebrew text, uses the concept of “disputation terminology,” as part of her research into prophetic indictments, which is what she calls these verses here in Isa.43:9-12.¹⁶⁶ She argues that the use of רִיב, lawsuit, in Isaiah 41:11 and 41:21, together with the appearance of עֵד, witness, in 43:9, 10, and 12, constitutes “legal language,” and is “... an indicator of an attitude of anger, judgment, and indictment.”¹⁶⁷

If Watts and Heffelfinger are correct, this chiastic poem of Isa. 43:9-12 is a part of a legal discourse by God and continues the use of the word witness in legal contexts in the Old Testament.¹⁶⁸ The focus on God as the only God is covenantal and perhaps indicates Israel’s violation of the first commandment.

God’s emphasis that he is the only God, and that Israel is witness to this fact, continues in Isa. 44:8, just a few verses on from those one discusses previously. There, at the end of verse 8, God declares, “You are my witnesses! Is there any God besides me? There is no other rock! I know not one (NRSV).” The LXX of 44:8, while similar to 43:8-13, is again not exact, and it does not include any genitival form of the possessive pronoun μου, to warrant the NRSV translation “...my witnesses.”

The last clause of Isa. 44:8 LXX reads, μάρτυρες ὑμεῖς ἐστε, εἰ ἔστιν θεὸς πλὴν ἐμοῦ, “You are witnesses; if there is a god except ME [emphasis added].” Again, the LXX uses an emphatic

¹⁶⁴ John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*. ed. John D. W. Watts, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 114.

¹⁶⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 135.

¹⁶⁶ Katie M. Heffelfinger, ““I Am Large, I Contain Multitudes”: Second Isaiah's Lyric Exploration of Divine Relational and Emotional Complexity” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2009), 215.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 215-216.

¹⁶⁸ Van der Walt also sees these verses as part of a legal context, Chris van der Walt, “The Deaf Cannot See: An Accumulation of Blindness and Deafness as Combined Theme in Isaiah 42 and 43,” *In Die Skriflig* 48, no. 2 (2014).

form of μου, which is ἐμοῦ, to stress the exclusivity of God's existence. This ties the witness of Isa. 44:8 to the witness of Isa. 43:8-13. Israel is witness to the uniqueness of God.

Jeremiah LXX includes several references to witness as well, beginning with 36:23 (Jer. 29:23 NRSV), where God condemns Sedekias and Achiab for perpetuating lawlessness, adultery, and claiming to speak on behalf of the Lord.¹⁶⁹ God had spoken to Jeremiah telling the people to settle down in Babylon for they would be there seventy years. Apparently, false prophets arose in Babylon claiming the contrary.

In condemning Sedekias and Achiab, God declares himself as witness against them, writing, καὶ ἐγὼ μάρτυς, I am witness. Although this phrase is technically different from Isaiah 43:10-13, which uses καὶ γὰρ μάρτυς, it is effectively the same. God calls himself as witness against either Israel or, in this case, Sedekias and Achiab.¹⁷⁰

Jer. 36:22 indicates this co-text is a covenant or legal section using κατάραν, "curse."¹⁷¹ God's condemnation amounts to a covenant curse, as indicted by lawlessness, adultery, and false prophecy.¹⁷² The author strengthens the context of the noun for curse with the expression of λήμψονται ἀπ' αὐτῶν καταραν, "they shall receive a curse." Λήμψονται, is a future middle

¹⁶⁹ This condemnation comes in a letter that Jeremiah sends from Jerusalem to the elders of the exiles. It is also in response to a letter that Shemaiah of Nehelam falsely sent to the exiles claiming to speak in the name of the Lord. Apparently, Shemaiah was contradicting Jeremiah's prophecy from God that the Israelites should settle down in Babylon. The role of writing, in this instance the writing and sending of letters, is a critical part of Jeremiah as writing occurs often. For general issues surrounding the topic of writing in Jeremiah, see Joachim Schaper, "On Writing and Reciting in Jeremiah 36," in *Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah*, ed. Hans M. Barstad and Reinhard G. Kratz, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 173-204; Janneke Stegeman, "Decolonizing Jeremiah: Identity, Narratives, and Power in Religious Tradition" (Ph.D. diss., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2014).

¹⁷⁰ The English translation assistance for this verse is from, Albert Pietersma and Marc Saunders, "Jeremias," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 913.

¹⁷¹ The word for curse appears five times in Jeremiah, all seemingly in conjunction with the punishment of the Israelites for violating the covenant. See Jer. 24:9, 33:6, 36:22, 51:8, and 51:12.

¹⁷² Anderson indicates the different nuances of curse that appear in the Old Testament, several of which include legal contexts, Jeff S. Anderson, "The Metonymical Curse as Propaganda in the Book of Jeremiah," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 8, (1998): 2.

indicative verb, which one may translate, “they shall receive.”¹⁷³ Walters argues that the use of a future indicative in the context of a curse or benediction may substitute for an optative or an imperative.¹⁷⁴ This is true of Jeremiah 36:22LXX.

Jeremiah 39:10LXX (32:10 NRSV) also includes the word witness in what appears as a legal context.¹⁷⁵ Jeremiah, in purchasing a piece of land, writes on a scroll, gets a witness, *μάρτυρας*, and makes this witness to stand up.¹⁷⁶ *ἔστησα*, which is an aorist active indicative first person singular form of *ἵστημι*, “to stand,” is a common word in conjunction with witness.

The use of deeds, witnesses, sealed copies, scales, acquisitions, all combine to give a sense of a legal transaction, even if it is civil or social, rather than judicial, or, in some sense, criminal.¹⁷⁷

Huey Jr. notes that this text reflects the law of redemption from Leviticus 25:25-34, since Jeremiah must redeem the land from his relative Hanamel, the son of Jeremiah’s uncle Shallum.¹⁷⁸ Huey Jr. further writes, “Jeremiah ... signed and sealed the deed in the presence of witnesses to guarantee its legality.”¹⁷⁹

Keown, et al., argues that this transaction is like transactions in Aramaic legal documents from the 5th to 3rd centuries B. C.¹⁸⁰ If Huey Jr. and Keown, et al., are correct, then this is another

¹⁷³ Pietersma and Saunders, “Jeremias,” 913.

¹⁷⁴ Peter Walters, *The Text of the Septuagint: Its Corruptions and Their Emendation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 237.

¹⁷⁵ For connections of this passage to the arrangement of other passages in Jeremiah, see Alexander Rofé, “The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah,” *Zeitschrift für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101, no. 3 (1989).

¹⁷⁶ The New English Translation of the Septuagint does not translate this idea well, writing that Jeremiah “got witnesses to witness,” Pietersma and Saunders, “Jeremias,” 916. This translation does not reflect the use of the Greek for “stand up,” such as Jeremiah “got witnesses and made them to stand up.”

¹⁷⁷ One uses the word criminal loosely, as in the sense of violating the covenant.

¹⁷⁸ F.B. Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*. ed. E. Ray Clendenen, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 290. For a discussion of textual variants, which call Hanamel Jeremiah’s uncle, see Bertil Albrektson, “Translation and Emendation,” in *Text, Translation, Theology: Selected Essays on the Hebrew Bible*, Society for Old Testament Study Series (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010), 104.

¹⁷⁹ Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 291.

¹⁸⁰ Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*. ed. Bruce Metzger, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 154.

instance where witness appears in a legal context, and, additionally, another instance where a witness stands, as with previous references in the Pentateuch.

The purpose of this passage in Jeremiah 39LXX is to indicate that Jeremiah is to buy land because God will restore the people to the land after the Babylonian exile. This is evident in later texts, such as Jeremiah 39:25LXX and 39:44, where in both cases the text of Jeremiah recalls the original purchase of the land in 39:10.

In Jer. 39:25LXX the language is similar, though slightly different. Jeremiah recounts in 39:25LXX that God said, ἐπεμαρτυράμην μάρτυρας, “You shall get witnesses who bear witness.”¹⁸¹ Jeremiah 39:44LXX, is also like 39:10LXX and 39:25LXX, but again, it is not exact. It reads διαμαρτυρή μαρτυρας, “have witnesses witness.”¹⁸²

While the immediate co-text of Jeremiah 39:44 is not legal in nature, it is recalling the symbolic purpose of Jeremiah purchasing of land, sealing a record of this purchase, and having witnesses witness the transaction.¹⁸³ God will redeem his people and the purchase of the land is a sign of future hope. Keown recognizes that Jeremiah 32BHS, 39LXX, is a part of God’s consolation, which began in the previous two chapters. He goes on to argue that this verse is a part of an announcement of salvation.¹⁸⁴

Regardless of the genre and the role of witness in the announcement of salvation, God’s recollection of Jeremiah’s land purchase and the discussion of the transaction in general, refers to specific legal function, indicating again the role of witness in various legal texts of the OT.

¹⁸¹ Addressing the Hebrew text, Keown believes Jer. 39:25 is a complaint, *ibid.*, 145.

¹⁸² Pietersma and Saunders, “Jeremias,” 916.

¹⁸³ While Jer. 39:25LXX is a complaint, Keown classifies the entirety of this section as a prayer, and Jer. 39:25LXX or 32:25BHS, as a lament. The section here in Jer. 39:44 is God’s answer to the lament, Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 148. Huey Jr. correctly sees a parallel between Jer. 39:44LXX (32:44BHS), and Jer. 17:26, which is the same in the BHS and LXX, Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 296.

¹⁸⁴ Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52*, 149.

Jeremiah 49:5LXX, or 42:5BHS and NRSV, is the last reference to *μάρτυς* in Jeremiah. There, a small remnant of Judah remains, undecided how to react after Ishmael son of Nethaniah struck down the Babylonian appointed governor Gedaliah. Although this remnant did not take part in the assassination, they fear the reprisal of Babylon. They ask Jeremiah what they should do and Jeremiah agrees to inquire of the Lord for them, withholding nothing from them that Lord says.

In response, the people declare what amounts to an oath, or the acceptance of a minor covenant with Jeremiah. They say, “Let the Lord be among us as a just and faithful witness, if—according to every word with which the Lord sends you to us—we shall not act thus.”¹⁸⁵

The LXX records the section on witness as, *μάρτυρα δίκαιον καὶ πιστόν*. Given the anarthrous construction, this could potentially be an attributive or a predicate construction. However, it appears from the noun+adjective+adjective construction in the context, that this is a fourth attributive position,¹⁸⁶ and one should translate it as just and faithful witness, as above, rather than “the witness is just and faithful.” While not a strictly legal text, the invocation of God as witness is an oath and one could consider it legal in a sense.

Malachi 3:5 is the last OT text one will address regarding the use of *μάρτυς* in a search for associated common places. Smith indicates that Mal. 2.17-3:5 is a unit in the BHS, and is a “prophetic dispute” between God and the Levitical priests.¹⁸⁷ Malachi 3 introduces the theme of the coming covenant messenger. In the previous chapter, God has condemned Israel for their faithlessness to the covenant. Now, chapter 3:1-5 brings a new tone. In response to the question

¹⁸⁵ Pietersma and Saunders, “Jeremias,” 922.

¹⁸⁶ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 310.

¹⁸⁷ Smith, *Micah--Malachi*, 327. Taylor and Clendenen extend the section through verse 6, Richard A. Taylor and E. Ray Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 392.

at the end of chapter 2, “Where is the God of justice?” God foretells of a coming messenger who will prepare the way before the Lord, and the Lord will return to his temple.¹⁸⁸

Mal. 3:2-4 describes what will happen after the Lord comes, and presents the Lord as one who will refine the priests and will then accept the offerings of the people, looking on their sacrifices with favor. Finally, Mal. 3:5 declares, “And I will draw near to you in judgment; I will be a swift witness against the sorceresses and against the adulteresses and against those who swear by my name falsely and against those who defraud the hired worker of his wages and those who oppress the widow and those who buffet orphans and those who turn aside justice from the guest and those who do not fear me, says the Lord Almighty.”¹⁸⁹

The Greek clause relevant to this discussion reads, καὶ ἔσομαι μάρτυς ταχύς, “and I will become a swift witness...” The appearance of the anarthrous noun+adjective construction is another example of what Wallace calls the fourth attributive position regarding anarthrous noun+adjective constructions.¹⁹⁰ In this case, the noun and the adjective are nominative singular masculine and while they are in an attributive construction with respect to each other, they are in a predicate position with respect to the verb ἔσομαι.

¹⁸⁸ Longenecker believes that Jesus’ conflation of the context of Malachi 3:1ff, together with Isa. 40:3, in the texts of Matt. 11:10 and Luke 7:27, is an example of *peshet* (this is that), a form of Jewish teaching or exegesis. In those NT texts, Jesus indicates that John the Baptist is the messenger who will prepare the way before the Lord. Longenecker distinguishes *peshet* from midrash by defining midrash as “commentary on scripture with a present-day application,” while *peshet* is a “revelatory stance and highlights eschatological fulfillment in showing how the present situation is foretold and supported by the ancient biblical text (this is that),” Richard N. Longenecker, s.v. “Early Church Interpretation.” ed. Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 79. Gibson notes that God deals with the people’s three criticisms against him in reverse order, with the question of “Where is the God of justice?” being the first criticism God addresses, Jonathon Gibson, “Who Can Endure the Day of His Coming?: Inner-Biblical Allusion and Exegesis in Relation to New Covenant (Malachi 2.17-3.6),” in *Covenant Continuity and Fidelity: A Study of Inner-Biblical Allusion and Exegesis in Malachi*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (London; Oxford; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 158.

¹⁸⁹ George E. Howard, “The Twelve Prophets,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 821.

¹⁹⁰ Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 310.

It is possible that this verse is a surface metaphor, with both the tenor and vehicle of the metaphor present. Since it is not immediately clear in the co-text that ontological incongruity exists, one would have to determine by the sense of the text, and by other metaphorical primes, that this statement is metaphorical.

One concludes that given the nature of the people's offense in Malachi 3, adultery, fraud, false testimony, and withholding justice, that the sentence that God is a swift witness is not metaphorical, but rather a subset proposition, that is, "the predicate nominative describes the class to which the subject belongs."¹⁹¹ God is, in this case, a subset of swift witness, meaning that it is possible for others to serve as swift witnesses as well. However, this class of witness is vague, undescribed in the rest of the OT. It is also clear that the reverse of the subset is not identical, in that a swift witness is not necessarily God.

Moreover, Smith sees this section as likely part of a covenant lawsuit and a court scene, due to the use of the terms, "draw near, judgment, and witness," as well as "the presentation of evidence."¹⁹² It is reasonable to conclude that the use of witness here, as in so many other OT texts, is indicative of a legal context.

In a summary of witness in the OT, the above survey indicates that *μάρτυς* is an overwhelmingly legal term.¹⁹³ One then proceeds to the NT with this information in mind. While there is no guarantee that the NT uses the term in the same fashion, this information makes it likely that when the NT draws upon the OT usage of this term it is in a legal context.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁹² Smith, *Micah--Malachi*, 327. Without saying this is a legal context, Taylor and Clendenen infer it, Taylor and Clendenen, *Haggai, Malachi*, 392. Gibson infers it as well, writing of the covenantal context, of covenant stipulations, laws, and lawbreakers, Gibson, "Who Can Endure the Day of His Coming?: Inner-Biblical Allusion and Exegesis in Relation to New Covenant (Malachi 2.17-3.6)," 159.

¹⁹³ The same is true of its Hebrew counterpart *עֵד*, which Chisholm makes quite clear, stating the word "...often refers to a legal witness to the truth of the matter, Robert B. Chisholm, s.v. "עֵד." ed. Willem VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zonderan Publishing House, 1997).

Before moving to the NT, one also notes from this study of witness that two issues arose from the literature that the OT does not explicitly address, which appear in other ANE cultures: the reliability of slaves as witnesses, and the role of women, as compared to men, as witnesses.¹⁹⁴ Grayson notes that debt slaves, as opposed to foreign slaves, could act as witnesses in Assyrian law courts, and that women, who were quite inferior to men in Assyrian and Babylonian culture, would rarely appear in legal matters because they had "... no status or rights as an individual."¹⁹⁵ However, Kramer indicates that women in Sumer had significant legal roles and could serve as witnesses.¹⁹⁶

From a Greek standpoint, Trites states that only adult males could serve as witnesses in Greek courts.¹⁹⁷ Pomeroy et al. indicates that slaves were "optimal witnesses," in ancient Greece as they were "obliged to assist their owners in illicit activities."¹⁹⁸

Although these final issues immediately above do not directly affect the conclusions of this dissertation, they do represent something of a lacuna in witness studies. Additionally, one cannot overstate the importance of the above information as it relates to the totality of witness studies. Since metaphors rely upon understanding the associated common places between the compared words, searching for possible associations in the cultures of the ANE may provide

¹⁹⁴ Maccini addresses the role of women witnesses in the NT, attempting to demonstrate that their testimony regarding Jesus in the Gospel of John is equally valid with the testimony of men, Robert Gordon Maccini, *Her Testimony is True: Women as Witnesses According to John*. The Library of New Testament Studies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). The Talmud does not overlook the role of women as witnesses, generally presenting a negative view of their testimony. E.g. In response to differences of opinion as to the hour people should cease using leaven for Sabbath preparation, R Yosé writes, "But the matter here is given over to women and women are slow [and hence they lose track of time, confusing the fifth and seventh hours]," Jacob Neusner, *The Jerusalem Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), y. Pesah. 1:4, I.2.D.

¹⁹⁵ Albert K. Grayson, "Assyrian Civilization," in *The Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and Other States of the Near East, From the Eighth to the Sixth Centuries B.C.*, ed. John Boardman et al., The Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; Madrid; Cape Town: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 207.

¹⁹⁶ Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 78.

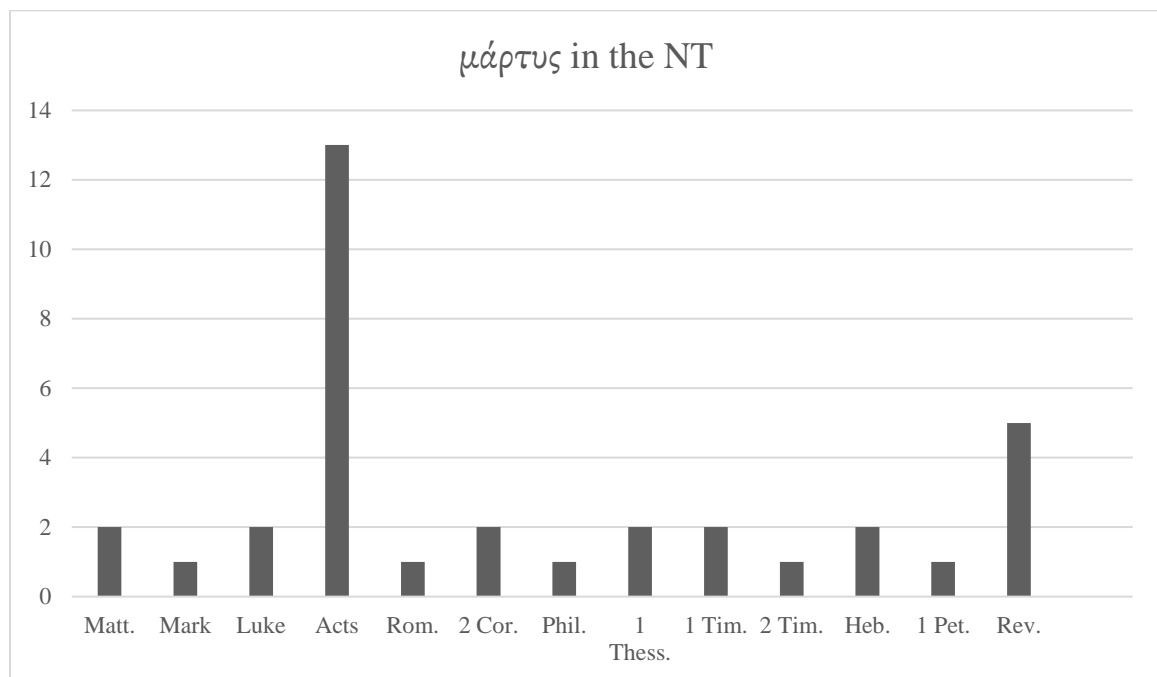
¹⁹⁷ Allison A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*. (Cambridge; London; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 5.

¹⁹⁸ Sarah B. Pomeroy, Walter Donlan, Stanley M. Burstein, and Jennifer Tolbert Roberts, *A Brief History of Ancient Greece: Politics, Society, and Culture*. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 237.

guidelines for interpreting the metaphors one finds in the NT, specifically the metaphors of witness in the NT. That said, one now moves to the uses of witness in the NT.

3.4 Overview of Witness in the New Testament

While the Greek term for witness, *μάρτυς*, does not appear as often in the NT as it does in the OT, its use is nonetheless significant for understanding the potential influence of associated common places for John in the Apocalypse.¹⁹⁹ As with the LXX, one provides a chart here outlining the use of witness in the UBS 5 Greek NT:



Before moving to an overview of witness in the NT, it is important to recognize that the use of *μάρτυς* in Greek literature in general is “naturally part of the legal language of Greek

¹⁹⁹ One is aware of the many different forms of *μάρτυς* in the New Testament, specifically verbal forms. An examination of every word is beyond the scope of this inquiry. While the other words give a general sense of witness in the NT, for associated common places, one prefers an exploration of the exact word.

courts, and it could be used metaphorically for all kinds of observations and attestation.”²⁰⁰

Trites’ survey of Greek literature concludes with a similar observation, “Μάρτυς is originally a juridical term applied to a witness in a court of law.”²⁰¹ In most cases, Trites believes that μάρτυς in Greek literature is “... a by-product of the law court...,” whether for lawsuits, attestation of documents, contracts, agreements, wills, or public records.²⁰² This leads him to conclude, “In other words, a man may appear as a witness in a lawsuit or in a considerable number and variety of activities connected with the law.”²⁰³

With this in mind, one begins an exploration of witness in the Gospels. As the chart above demonstrates, the use of the noun μάρτυς for witness is not common in any NT work outside of Acts and Revelation, and this is particularly acute in the gospels, given their comparative size to the rest of the NT documents.

Matthew includes the word μάρτυς only twice, and has only one appearance of the verbal form, μαρτυρέω, to testify, in Matt. 23:31, where Jesus condemns the Pharisees and scribes as testifying against themselves that they are descendants of those Israelites who murdered the prophets. Matthew places the use of a rare verbal form of καταμαρτυρέω, to testify against, in the mouths of the high priest in Matt. 26:62 and Pilate in Matt. 27:13.²⁰⁴ In both instances, the situation is clearly legal, with Jesus standing trial before both.

In 26:62, the high priest demands of Jesus, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” The use of καταμαρτυρέω, to testify against, is not only legal, but negative,

²⁰⁰ Glen W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*. (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; Madrid; Cape Town: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5. He notes that later Christians distorted the meaning of the word from witness to one who dies for their faith.

²⁰¹ Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, 9.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 9-10.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 10. Trites does admit that witness occurs in non-legal contexts, such as historiography, but notes that even in these instances, witnesses appear in order to establish the facts, *ibid.*, 15.

²⁰⁴ See an identical statement in Mark 14:60.

in that the testimony is an accusation of wrongdoing. It is also noteworthy that Matthew uses another rare term in the NT in conjunction with this negative testimony. The accusations come from the mouths of *ψευδομαρτύρων*, false witnesses, which occurs only twice in the NT.²⁰⁵

Matt. 27:13 also has the negative testimony in the mouth of Pilate, when he asks Jesus, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” In this case, the accusations come from the chief priests and elders. While the use of false witness does not occur in this passage, one cannot help but wonder if Matthew intends to connect the chief priests and elders with the false witnesses of 26:62, given the rare use of the word in the NT.

There are no references to *μαρτυρία*, testimony, a noun referring to the content of a testimony or the actual given testimony of a witness. Similarly, there are no references to *διαμαρτύρομαι*, another verb, often legal, meaning to give testimony or to bear witness.²⁰⁶

Returning to *μάρτυς*, Matthew 18:16 draws upon the texts of Deut. 17 and 19, which one mentions previously, although in a slightly different context. Jesus says in Matt. 18:15, that “if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private (NASB) ...”²⁰⁷ Jesus continues in Matt. 18:16 saying that if the brother will not listen to you, “take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses (NRSV).”

²⁰⁵ The word is here and in 1 Cor. 15:15, where some accuse Paul and his companions of being false witnesses for testifying that God raised Christ from the dead. That said, *ψευδομαρτυρία*, false testimony, or the content of what a false witness says, is in Matt. 15:19 and 26:59, the only two NT references. Regarding Matt. 26:59, Nolland’s statement “Anticipating the reference to false witnesses in Mark 14:56-57, Matthew replaces *μαρτυρίαν* (‘witness’) with *ψευδομαρτυρίαν* (‘false witness’),” is not as significant as he makes it seem, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1124. Mark twice uses *ἐψευδομαρτύρουν*, an imperfect indicative verb, to describe, “... many were testifying falsely” against Jesus. Matthew changes Mark’s focus on the actions of giving false witness, to a more permanent character description. When Mark uses *μαρτυρίαν* it is to indicate that the testimony (*μαρτυρίαν*) of those bearing false witness (*ἐψευδομαρτύρουν*) did not agree, something Matthew does not address.

²⁰⁶ Many passages, the legal status of which one does not explore, translate this word as “warn.” See Exod. 19:21, Exod. 21:29, Deut. 8:19, Jer. 6:10, and Luke 16:28.

²⁰⁷ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update*. (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). The NRSV’s translation of “if a member of the church sins against you,” is, in one’s opinion, too interpretive and takes too many liberties with the Greek.

Jesus uses Deuteronomy often in Matthew's Gospel, and in this case, Crowe regards Matthew's use as in implicit citation, where the author's introductory formula is "sufficiently vague that one could not rightly call it a formula."²⁰⁸ Although Matthew 18 does not have the strict legal sense of Deuteronomy, the reference to the law appears to make this passage legal in a covenantal sense.

Matthew 26:65 also uses the term *μάρτυς* in what is certainly a legal text.²⁰⁹ As one has already noted, this text writes of Jesus' trial before the high priest. In this verse, the high priest tears his clothes after hearing Jesus speak of "the Son of Man, seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26:64 NRSV)." Having torn his clothes, the high priest declares, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy... (26:65 NRSV)." The question, "Why do we still need witnesses," is *τί ἔτι χρεῖαν ἔχομεν μαρτύρων*;

It is significant that Matthew records the direct speech of the high priest as calling those who testified "witnesses," in 26:65. Matthew, as the narrator, records these same people as false witnesses in 26:62. The contrast is difficult to miss.

Mark's only use of *μάρτυς* is identical to Matthew's reference in Matt. 26:64. In Mark 14:63, during Mark's portrayal of the trial of Jesus, the high priest declares, *τί ἔτι χρεῖαν ἔχομεν μαρτύρων*; "Why do we still need witnesses?" Although portions of Mark's account vary slightly

²⁰⁸ Brandon D. Crowe, "Methodology and Approach," in *The Obedient Son: Deuteronomy and Christology in the Gospel of Matthew*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche (Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 11. For more on Matthew's use of the OT, see Richard B. Hays, "The Gospel of Matthew: Reconfigured Torah," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 61, no. 1&2 (2005).

²⁰⁹ Hendrickson sees this passage as taking place during the first of two trials. The first trial is an ecclesiastical trial, before the high priest, and the second trial is civil, taking place before Pilate and Herod, William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*. Baker New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 927. Sloman skips this verse entirely saying nothing of the Greek text, Arthur Sloman, Brooke Foss Westcott, and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew: Being the Greek Text*. Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London: MacMillan, 1912), 134.

from Matthew, this question regarding witness shows no variance. As with Matthew, Mark labels those who accuse Jesus as those “giving false testimony,”²¹⁰ whereas the high priest simply calls them witnesses.²¹¹ Naturally, the high priest would not call his own witnesses false, but the differing perspective in the narratives of both gospels is stark. Also, like Matthew, Mark has the only other reference to *καταμαρτυρέω*, testify against, in the mouth of the high priest in the same trial (Mark 14:60).

While the three uses of *καταμαρτυρέω* offer some insight into the legal context of Matthew and Mark, the four uses of the word in the LXX also offer some insight as well, as they all occur with negative connotations. For instance, in 1 Kings 21:13, two scoundrels (false witnesses) come and falsely testify against (*καταμαρτυρέω*) Naboth that he cursed God and the king.²¹² The witnesses are part of a plot by Queen Jezebel and King Ahab to take Naboth’s vineyard, which Naboth refuses to sell to the king.²¹³ They then stone Naboth to death and Ahab steals Naboth’s vineyard, a crime for which Jezebel and Ahab pay with their own lives.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Kleist introduces some of the basic issues surrounding the false testimony of these witnesses in James A. Kleist, “The Two False Witnesses (Mk. 14:55ff),” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (July 1947).

²¹¹ The difference between the high priest’s perspective and Mark’s, as the narrator, is particularly acute given that of the five uses of *ψευδομαρτυρέω*, to give false witness (the singular, lexical form means, “I give false witness”), which appear in the NT, three are in Mark, and two are in this small section regarding Jesus’ trial. The other use in Mark is in 10:19, where Jesus tells a man who asks him about eternal life, “You know the commandments: ... You shall not bear false witness.” Given the rare word usage, it is hard to imagine there is not a connection between what those in Mark 14 are doing and Jesus’ recital of the commandments in Mark 10. The other appearances of the verb are in similar synoptic stories. The first is Matt. 19:18, which is a similar narrative to Mark’s in Mark 10, except that Matthew says, someone came, and Luke 18:20, where Luke calls the person asking about eternal life, a certain ruler.

²¹² Hamilton places this verse in the sixth of six narratives that he believes pit Elijah against Ahab, Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books*, 427.

²¹³ Hamilton sees this passage as rooted in the legal interpretations of the Torah, specifically Leviticus and Deuteronomy. He speculates Naboth’s refusal to sell is likely the result of Lev. 25:23-24, which prohibited permanent sale, or the result of Deut. 19:14 and 27:17, which prohibit the moving of a person’s boundary marker, *ibid.*, 438. The outcome is that Naboth seeks to uphold the law, while Ahab violates it, including through the use of false witnesses. DeVries sees the text as a “Judicial Murder,” and argues Naboth’s refusal results from Lev. 25 as well, Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings*, ed. Bruce Metzger, 2nd ed., Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2003), 252-256.

²¹⁴ Magdalene has an excellent chapter regarding the Naboth narrative. She understands the whole story as part of a divine court narrative against Ahab. She sees the royal abuse of power as actionable at law, and God is taking action, F. Rachel Magdalene, “Trying the Crime of Abuse of Royal Authority in the Divine Courtroom and the Incident of Naboth’s Vineyard,” in *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Ari Mermelstein and Shalom E.

Proverbs 25:18 uses the same verb, writing, “Like a war club, a sword, or a sharp arrow, is one who bears false witness against a neighbor.”²¹⁵ In addition to false testimony, μαρτυρίαν ψευδῆ, the proverb uses καταμαρτυρέω, to indicate the testimony is against a neighbor. The proverb likely derives from the prohibition against false witness in Exod. 20:16,²¹⁶ and demonstrates that the verb for testifying against bears a generally negative connotation.

In Daniel 6:24, those who testified against Daniel, causing the king to cast him into the lion’s den, were later themselves cast into the den, along with their families, where the lions killed them. The entire chapter details the story of palace intrigue, where satraps and presidents were jealous of Daniel’s authority, given to him by King Darius. They plot to overthrow Daniel, creating laws prohibiting prayer to God. Daniel continues to pray and their plot apparently works, as they testify against Daniel that he has continued praying. The condemnation for breaking the law is death in the lions’ den. As God miraculously delivers Daniel, Darius turns the tables on the satraps and presidents, throwing them into the den.²¹⁷ It is evident from the passage that the reason for their deaths was their testimony against (καταμαρτυρέω) Daniel.²¹⁸

Job 15:6 records the speech of Job’s companion Eliphaz the Temanite, who says that Job’s own lips testify against (καταμαρτυρέω) him. Adlen posits that Eliphaz is arguing that

Holtz, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 167. This concept would make any use of witnesses in the narrative a part of a legal context. Westbrook has an introductory chapter on the abuse of power in the legal system of the ANE, indicating that judges and kings are responsible for upholding the law and not discriminating for the powerful, Raymond Westbrook, *Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Law*. Cahiers De La Revue Biblique (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1988), 9-38. Westbrook indicates this abuse is generally in the context of theft and robbery, but here, it is murder.

²¹⁵ Garrett rightly notes that Proverbs 25:18-20, contains three similes regarding “people one should avoid.” This specific Proverb indicates what Garrett calls a perjurer, who is likened to a dangerous weapon, Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 208.

²¹⁶ So Murphy, *Proverbs*, 193.

²¹⁷ Mangano notes the irony of the situation here, pointing out that these satraps and presidents were disloyal, rather than Daniel, because they “deprived the king of his ablest administrator,” Mangano, *Esther & Daniel*, 237.

²¹⁸ Miller, working with the Hebrew, writes that the English translation of “falsely accused,” is a gloss of the Hebrew idiom, which says the satraps and presidents were those “who had eaten his pieces,” meaning Daniel’s pieces. He indicates this is idiomatic of speaking maliciously, Miller, *Daniel*, 187.

Job's suffering, described in previous chapters, is the result of Job's guilt and sin.²¹⁹ Clines believes that Eliphaz is not arguing Job is guilty, but that Job endangers his innocent by his reckless words.²²⁰

Clines also appears to indicate that the text of Job 15:6 is a part of a larger legal proceeding that Job fears God may be prosecuting against him. In such a "formal lawsuit," Job's own words testify against him. Clines also writes that this proceeding is a "metaphorical law-court."²²¹

Given the above contexts and uses of *καταμαρτυρέω*, as well as *μάρτυς*, it is not difficult for one to conclude that Matthew and Mark use the verbal and substantive forms of witness to indicate in some way a legal context. Whether this legality is as formal as the OT uses is difficult to prove, except where the uses occur in the trial of Jesus.

Luke has forms of *μάρτυς* twice, the first being a plural form in Luke 11:48. For Luke, the co-text of 11:48 has Jesus condemning the lawyers for their hypocrisy, declaring several woe oracles against them. In this instance, Jesus preaches against the Jewish lawyers for building the tombs of the prophets that their ancestors killed. In verse 48, Jesus states, "So you are witnesses and approve of the deeds of your ancestors; for they killed them, and you build their tombs."²²²

²¹⁹ Alden, *Job*, 173.

²²⁰ David J.A. Clines, *Job 1-20*. ed. Bruce Metzger, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 348.

²²¹ Ibid., 349.

²²² Marshall briefly comments on the Greek of this verse, noting little that is useful here, but believing that the Greek is a bit rough in places, Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 500. Hendriksen too, while commenting specifically on the Greek text, ignores the use of witness, William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*. Baker New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), 646. Stein does not address the verse either, Robert H. Stein, *Luke*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 342. Nor do Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 1120; John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*. ed. Bruce Metzger, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 667; J. Reiling and J.L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Luke*. UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 455; Norval Geldenhuys, *Luke*. ed. F.F. Bruce, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 343.

The verse is like Matthew 23:31, however, as one notes above, Matthew uses the verbal form of witness, stating the Pharisees bear witness. Luke chooses to focus upon the characterization of the lawyers as witnesses against themselves, a bit of irony for those skilled in the law.

Godet sees a connection with the situation here in Luke 11:48 and that of the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7:58. He notes that both passages employ the use of *μάρτυς* and *συνευδοκεῖν*, to approve.²²³ While Jesus condemns the lawyers in Luke for being witnesses against themselves by approving of, or joining in with, their ancestors in the killing of the prophets, the witnesses in Acts 7:58 tear their clothes to stone Stephen, and Saul stands there giving approval to Stephen's death. Godet argues in both instances that the approving party stands in the tradition of Deut. 17:7, where witnesses stand to bring about the death penalty.

Godet's assertion is unique and worth considering, given that the verb *συνευδοκεῖν* occurs six times in the NT, of which three are pivotal to this discussion. One is here in the co-text of Luke 11:48, one is in Acts 7:58 where Stephen dies, and one in Acts 22:20.²²⁴ The Acts 22:20 account strengthens Godet's observation, though he does not mention it. In that passage, Paul stands on the steps of the Roman barracks in Jerusalem and addresses the Jewish crowd who wishes to have him arrested and tried on the charge that he brought a Gentile into the temple, a passage one addresses earlier in this work.

Paul begins a defense of himself and in so doing, recounts the story of Stephen's death in Acts 7. Paul mentions the same two words, *μάρτυς* and *συνευδοκεῖν*. Paul says that he was

²²³ Frédéric Louis Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke*. trans., Edward William Shalders and M.D. Cusin, vol. 2 (New York: I.K. Funk & Co., 1881), 83.

²²⁴ The others are in Rom. 1:32, which appears to have legal undertones, and twice in 1 Cor. 7:12-13, where Paul writes that if an unbelieving man or woman gives approval to live in marriage with a believing man or woman, that the believers should stay in the marriage.

standing by, giving approval, *συνευδοκεῖν*, while their witness, Stephen has his blood shed. The only difference in the two Acts accounts is that in Acts 7, those throwing the stones are witnesses against Stephen, whereas in Acts 22:20, Paul calls Stephen the witness. Nonetheless, the appearance of the words together in three texts, when the verb, “to approve,” is rare in the NT, is difficult to ignore. If Godet is correct, and one believes that he is, Luke’s use of witness in 11:47 is a legal text, referring to the process described in Deuteronomy by which Israel put people to death.

Luke 24:48 has Jesus opening the eyes of the disciples to understand all the events that have taken place. In a resurrection appearance, Jesus explains that they are witnesses to the suffering of the Messiah, that he was to rise from the dead, and they are to proclaim repentance and forgiveness in all the nations.²²⁵

Nolland notes the use of witness here in Luke 24, and ties it to Jesus’ proclamation in Acts 1:8 where Jesus tells the apostles they will be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. He believes that the central theme of this witness surrounds the resurrection of Jesus, in both Luke and Acts, but does not note whether the term is strictly or formally legal in any sense.²²⁶

Bock too, takes up the theme of witness in Luke 24, tying it to the extensive use of witness in the book of Acts. He, following Nolland, sees the witness as surrounding the resurrection of Jesus, as well as Jesus’ suffering, teaching, and work. Without commenting on the legal nature of witness, Bock spends more time discussing witness in Acts than he does the actual co-text of Luke 24.²²⁷

²²⁵ O’Brien calls these three things “scriptural necessities,” Peter T. O’Brien, “Mission, Witness, and the Coming of the Spirit,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 9, (1999): 209.

²²⁶ Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, 1120.

²²⁷ Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1941-1942.

O'Brien gives one of the more detailed accounts of this section in Luke 24:48, indicating that in this verse, the role of witness and the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins resulting from Jesus' death connect.²²⁸

That said, the nature of the use of witness here is ambiguous. It is not clear if a legal context or something else, such as a metaphorical use, is in view. With only two references to the word witness, one in a legal context, and one ambiguous, it is difficult to say that Luke uses the word with consistent meaning or implications.

Although the noun *μάρτυς* does not appear in John, meaning there are no references that could fully inform a search for associated common places between witness, olive trees, or lampstands, two words with similar roots appear 47 times in the Gospel.²²⁹ The noun for testimony, *μαρτυρία*, or the content of what a witness says, occurs 14 times,²³⁰ while the verb *μαρτυρέω*, I testify or bear witness, occurs 33 times. This word frequency is part of what leads Lincoln to identify the Gospel of John as a narrative rooted in the divine courtroom.²³¹ It is

²²⁸ O'Brien, "Mission, Witness, and the Coming of the Spirit," 209.

²²⁹ So Thomas W. Simpson, "Testimony in John's Gospel: The Puzzle of 5:31 and 8:14," *Tyndale Bulletin* 65, no. 1 (2014): 103.

²³⁰ One asserting that the word witness does not appear in John may confuse those relying on an English translation. This is because some English translations, such as the NRSV, change the focus on testimony, the content of what a witness says, to the actual witness. E.g. John 1:7 NRSV reads, "He came as a witness to testify to the light," John 3:28 reads, "You yourselves are my witnesses..." and 8:17 says, "... the testimony of two witnesses is valid." However, the UBS 5 does not use *μάρτυς* but *μαρτυρία*. Better renderings of the three, starting with 1:7 may be, "He (this one) came for testimony, in order to testify..." John 3:28, "You yourselves testify to me..." and for John 8:17, "The testimony of two men is true..." This last passage, John 8:17, likely refers to witness, since John has Jesus quoting scripture, "It has been written..." Yet what John has in the mouth of Jesus is a paraphrase, using men instead of witnesses, as one previously demonstrates regarding Deuteronomy. This passage is unambiguously legal, in that Jesus refers to a legal text and names two witnesses.

²³¹ Andrew T. Lincoln, "A Life of Jesus as Testimony: The Divine Courtroom and the Gospel of John," in *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Ari Mermelstein and Shalom E. Holtz, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 146. Lincoln similarly writes these statistics in Andrew T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 12. Sheppard also attempts to demonstrate a connection between the gospel and ancient Roman legal speeches, Beth M. Sheppard, "The Gospel of John: A Roman Legal and Rhetorical Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., University of Sheffield, 1999).

notable within the NT that the verb μαρτυρέω appears 33 times in John, as it dwarfs the next closest NT book, Acts, which has only eleven.

Lincoln calls the terms μαρτυρία and μαρτυρέω forensic terms, and adds that John uses the verb “to judge,” κρίνειν, 19 times, as opposed to six apiece in Matthew and Luke, and John uses the noun “judgment,” κρίσις, 11 times, as compared to four in Luke, though Lincoln does note that Matthew uses this noun 12 times.²³² He even states that the unique and major figure in John’s gospel, the Beloved Disciple, “...serves as the ideal witness,” because “of his intimate relationship to Jesus.”²³³

In another place, Lincoln adds to the legal vocabulary of John, noting that the word for truth, ἀλήθεια, “occurs twenty-five times in this Gospel as compared with seven times in the three Synoptics together.”²³⁴ He also points out that John uses two adjectives for true, ἀληθής, and, ἀληθινός, fourteen times, and nine times, respectively. These are compared with ἀληθής appearing once each in Mark and in Matthew, and ἀληθινός, appearing only once in Luke. He notes that John uses the adverb, ἀληθῶς, truly, seven times, “as compared to with three times each in Matthew and Luke and twice in Mark.”²³⁵ For Lincoln, all the references to truth takes “its most distinctive features” from the motif of lawsuit, which he posits is a “major metaphor” in John’s Gospel.²³⁶

To this legal milieu, one adds additional observations. In John 3:33, Jesus declares that anyone who accepts the testimony of the one who comes from heaven (in other words, the one who accepts Jesus’ testimony), “has certified this: God is true.” The verb for certify or seal,

²³² Lincoln, “A Life of Jesus as Testimony: The Divine Courtroom and the Gospel of John,” 146.

²³³ Ibid., 147.

²³⁴ Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel*, 12.

²³⁵ Ibid., 13.

²³⁶ Ibid.

σφραγίζω, is often a legal term, or a term indicating something is official, such as the sealing of a letter, or the certification of a witness, as it is here.²³⁷

The appearance of the word, ἀληθής, true, in John appears most often with respect to witness.²³⁸ In fact, it is common in John in general, in that the fourth Gospel contains 14 of 26 NT references. The only other book in the NT to contain more than one reference is 1 John with two.

This appeal to truth and witnesses prominently occurs again in John 8:17. Jesus proclaims himself the light of the world and the Pharisees challenge this, saying, “You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid (8:13).” Jesus responds, saying, “...my testimony is valid (true) because I know where I have come from and where I am going (8:14),” and continues in 8:16, “... my judgment is valid (true).” Jesus concludes in 8:17 with, “In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid (true). I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who has sent me testifies on my behalf.”

In this short pericope, truth appears four times, testimony or testify occurs seven times, and judge or judgment occurs an additional four times. The word law, in 8:17, occurs once. This dense passage appears as a legal argument between Jesus and the Pharisees and the validity or truthfulness of Jesus’ testimony.²³⁹

²³⁷ 1 Kgs. 21:8; 1 Esd. 3:8, Neh. 10:1, Esth. 3:10 and 8:8-10, Isa. 8:16, Isa. 29:11, Jer. 39:10-11, Jer. 39:25, Jer. 39:44, and Dan. 6:17. Beasley-Murray briefly notes the meaning of the word is to authenticate, Beasley-Murray, *John*, 53. Westcott notes the word, saying little of value for here, Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John: Introduction and Notes on the Authorized Version*. Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London: J. Murray, 1908), 62. Carson is unhelpful for one’s purposes here as well, saying little of testimony and truth, other than summarizing the negative opposite, one who disbelieves Jesus calls God a liar, Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press; Willam B. Eerdmans, 1991), 213. Barclay and Nida see the use of seal here as a metaphor, Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*. UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 103. While uncertain that John uses seal metaphorically, other NT passages do, e.g. 2 Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, Eph. 4:30, Rev. 7:3-4.

²³⁸ See John 5:31-32, John 7:18, John 8:13-14, 8:17, 8:26, John 10:41, John 19:35, and John 21:24.

²³⁹ Sheridan has a helpful introduction to the issues surrounding the interpretative difficulties of this text, Ruth Sheridan, “The Testimony of Two Witnesses: John 8:17,” in *Abiding Words: Perspectives on The Use of Scripture*

In fact, the word law, νόμος, occurs fifteen times in John, with several narratives focusing specifically on the idea that the Jews are attempting to judge Jesus based on their law.²⁴⁰ In John 7:45ff, when the temple police attempt to arrest Jesus but do not, the Pharisees appear angry. To this, Nicodemus, whom John identifies as “one of them [Pharisees],” responds, “Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?” It appears the Pharisees are willing to judge Jesus according to the law without a hearing.

John 18:31 records the words of Pilate after the Jews have brought Jesus to him. He tells the Jews, “Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law,” to which the Jews reply, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death.” This exchange demonstrates the legal nature of this story in John’s gospel, but also may indicate a larger metanarrative for John. In any case, it seems there is irony in the narrative: the Jews have already judged Jesus and passed sentence – death, without following due process in the calling of witnesses.²⁴¹

John affirms this conclusion in John 19:7 when he records the Jews as saying, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.” John’s narrative, to this point, intimates the Jewish leaders have called no witnesses against Jesus, something Jesus himself argues in 18:21. There, after the high priest questioned him about his teaching, Jesus replies, “Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.” All of this to say that John’s narrative has substantial legal and trial vocabulary beyond witness.

in the *Gospel of John*, ed. Alicia D. Myers and Bruce G. Schuchard, Resources for Biblical Study (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015). Among the issues she highlights is the emphatic use of the pronoun “your” law, showing distance between Jesus and the law, the content of Jesus’ testimony, with focus on the light of the world statement, and lastly, the Torah text which Jesus references, since it is not an exact quote, *ibid.*, 162-164.

²⁴⁰ John 1:17, 1:45, 7:19 (2x), 7:23, 7:49, 7:51, 8:5, 8:17, 10:34, 12:34, 15:25, 18:31, 19:7 (2x),

²⁴¹ Lincoln, in noting both John 8 and 18, includes helpful sections on how the Fourth Gospel appeals to the law, and reworks Deutero-Isaiah lawsuits, Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel*, 37-56.

Although one will not draw substantially upon John regarding the metaphor of the witnesses are the two lampstands and the two olive trees, the legal context of the *μάρτυς* word group, as supported by this other legal vocabulary, does contribute to the consistent view thus far that witness is a legal term.²⁴²

Tenney argues that this witness in John refers not to “the corroboration of Jesus’ historical existence and works,” but to “the character and significance of His person.”²⁴³ He also sees the use or presentation of “signs” in John’s gospel as attesting to this witness.²⁴⁴ Although the text does not call anyone an actual witness, Tenney sees five witnesses to this character and significance of Jesus: the Father, Jesus himself, John the Baptist,²⁴⁵ Jesus’ works, and Scriptures.²⁴⁶ He also states that two additional witnesses appear after Jesus’ death, the Holy Spirit and the Disciples.²⁴⁷

²⁴² Trites writes that, “... in the New Testament, the idea of witness is generally juridical,” Allison A. Trites, “The Idea of Witness in the Synoptic Gospels: Some Juridical Considerations,” *Themelios* 5, (1968): 18.

²⁴³ Merrill C. Tenney, “Topics from the Gospel of John Part III: The Meaning of ‘Witness’ in John,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132, (July 1975): 229-230. Brown holds this sentiment as well, writing, “...John 20:30-31 has made it clear that the author’s intention was to produce a document not of history but of faith,” Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*. The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 110.

²⁴⁴ Tenney, “Topics from the Gospel of John Part III: The Meaning of ‘Witness’ in John,” 230. Brown posits that this gathering of proofs is possibly part of the defense for Johannine Christians facing expulsion from the synagogue. In his view, the synagogue leaders are interrogating the Christians and the Christians must defend themselves. This, according to Brown, explains “the strong legal tone in John,” and he believes that, “If preaching shaped the Synoptic traditions, a type of courtroom defense had an impact on the Johannine tradition,” Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 69.

²⁴⁵ Myers has a helpful chapter on the potential juridical rhetoric of John the Baptist’s testimony, along with other interpretative issues. She notes that scripture is one of the most significant witnesses in John, thus agreeing with Tenney, Alicia D. Myers, “A Voice in the Wilderness: Classical Rhetoric and the Testimony of John (the Baptist) in John 1:19-34,” in *Abiding Words: Perspectives on the Use of Scripture in the Gospel of John*, ed. Alicia D. Myers and Bruce G. Schuchard, Resources for Biblical Studies (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015). Brown too believes that John is a legal text, writing, “The whole of John is a trial of Christ by the leaders of his people and the Baptist is the first trial witness,” Ramond E. Brown, *The Gospel of St. John and the Johannine Epistles*. New Testament Reading Guide (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1960), 18. In a later work, Brown calls John the Baptist, “...one of the major witnesses to Jesus,” Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 156. Carson argues that scholars, including Brown, too often ignore John 20:31, an important text in John, possibly expressing John’s purpose, Donald A. Carson, “The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:31 Reconsidered,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no. 4 (1987). The NRSV reads, “But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.” Carson believes John’s purpose is evangelistic, but does not say whether John could be using a lawsuit motif to portray an evangelistic message.

²⁴⁶ Tenney, “Topics from the Gospel of John Part III: The Meaning of ‘Witness’ in John,” 232-239.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 239-241.

Brown would likely add another witness to Tenney's list, and that is the character of the Beloved Disciple. He does not see this disciple as part of the twelve,²⁴⁸ and believes this disciple transmitted the oral tradition of Jesus that shaped the literary elements of what became the Gospel of John.²⁴⁹ Maloney, the final editor of Brown's posthumous work on John, writes, "I am personally attracted to Brown's understanding of his [John the Baptist] role as the chief witness and story-teller of the pre-literary stage of the Gospel."²⁵⁰

Returning to the testimony of Jesus, after his work on witness in John, Tenney posits that the testimony of which Jesus speaks is "self-authenticating." As the light of the world, Jesus needs no authentication, but his resurrection is "His own best witness, and He confirms the subordinate witnesses that support His claims."²⁵¹

Although one cannot trace the implication of *μάρτυς* directly from John, since the word does not appear, if the same person authored the Gospel, and the Book of Revelation, as some contend,²⁵² then the legal context of the other words sharing the same root may play a role in understanding the idea of witness in Revelation, and specifically, Rev. 11.

²⁴⁸ Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, 5.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 319.

²⁵¹ Tenney, "Topics from the Gospel of John Part III: The Meaning of 'Witness' in John," 241. Watson has a helpful section on the irony of apostolic eyewitness in John's gospel with respect to Jesus' words to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe (John 20:28-29)." Watson writes of the "blessing that contrasts faith based on sight with faith that lacks sight," and the relationship between the eyewitnesses and the faith of those who were not eyewitnesses, as well as those who saw Jesus and did not believe, Francis Watson, "The Gospel of John and New Testament Theology," in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: Essays in Honour of Robert Morgan*, ed. Christopher Rowland and Christopher M. Tuckett (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 251-257. His summary concerning John 20:29 about the faith of those who do not see and John 21:24, concerning the importance of those who do see, is poignant, "Eyewitness testimony is subverted in the one case and reaffirmed in the other," *ibid.*, 257.

²⁵² Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 25. cf. Osborne, *Revelation*, 5. Swete is "inclined toward the Apostle John," as the author of all the Johannine documents, but is open to other views, Swete, *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, clxxxi. Contra Aune, as well as Ford's esoteric belief that John the Baptist authored Revelation, Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, lvi; Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, 30. If the same author penned the Gospel, 1,2,3 John, and Revelation, then it is also noteworthy that testimony appears an additional seven times in John's epistles, six in 1 John 5:9-11, and once in 3 John 12. The verb "to witness," also appears an additional ten times in the three epistles of John, 1 John 1:2, 1 John 4:14, 1 John 5:6, 5:7, 5:9, 5:10, 3 John 3, 6, and 12 (twice).

As one moves from the Gospels to the book of Acts, witness is one of the major themes running through the book.²⁵³ Associated ideas with witness, particularly the act of giving testimony or bearing witness, are also significant in the book. There are thirteen references to *μάρτυς*, and the word *μαρτυρία*, a noun form of testimony, or the actual content of testimony, appears once, in Acts 22:18. Additionally, commentators on witness in Acts overlook the adjective *ἀμάρτυρον*, without witness, which appears in Acts 14:17.

Verbal associations with witness also exist in Acts. There are nine references to *διαμαρτύρομαι*, a verbal form of *μάρτυς*, indicating the giving of testimony or the calling of witnesses. Another verbal form, *μαρτυρέω*, appears eleven times. Interestingly, Acts also has two references to *μαρτύρομαι*, to bear witness,²⁵⁴ in 20:26 and 26:22. In both instances, this word is in the mouth of Paul, as are the only other three uses in the NT.²⁵⁵

Before looking at the concept of witness in Acts, one understands that Acts is a text steeped in judicial narrative. By this, one means that trials,²⁵⁶ arrests,²⁵⁷ imprisonments,²⁵⁸ police/guards,²⁵⁹ magistrates,²⁶⁰ rulers,²⁶¹ and other associated legal ideas abound.

Tenney also notes these additional uses, while understanding that the Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation are all Johannine, Tenney, "Topics from the Gospel of John Part III: The Meaning of 'Witness' in John," 229.

²⁵³ Trites argues that the idea of witness "is most fully developed in the Johannine and Lukan writings," Trites, "The Idea of Witness in the Synoptic Gospels: Some Juridical Considerations," 18. By Lukan writings, he surely means Acts, since the Gospel of Luke has so few references to witness or testimony in any form.

²⁵⁴ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 619.

²⁵⁵ Gal. 5:3, Eph. 4:17, 1 Thess. 2:12.

²⁵⁶ *Κρίνω*, I judge, and its forms, occur 21 times in Acts, in mostly juridical passages, civil and religious: Acts 3:13, 4:19, 15:19, 16:4, 21:25, 23:3, 23:6, 24:21, 25:9, 25:10, 25:20, 25:25, 26:6, 27:1.

²⁵⁷ Acts 1:16, 4:3, 5:18, 12:3, 21:33, 28:17.

²⁵⁸ Acts 4:7, 5:18, 5:19-25, 8:3, 12:4-6, 12:17, 16:23-40, 22:4, 23:18, 24:27, 25:14, 25:27, 26:10, 27:1, 27:42.

²⁵⁹ See Acts 5:22, 5:26, 16:35, and 16:38. The Acts 16:35 and 16:38 references use a uniquely Lukan term for police, *ῥαβδούχος*. It appears only in these two places in the NT. Acts 5:22 and 5:26 use *ὑπερέταις*, an official or assistant.

²⁶⁰ The Greek term that the NRSV translates magistrate, captain, or officer, is uniquely Lukan. *Στρατηγός* occurs ten times in the NT, two in Luke, eight in Acts. See Acts 4:1, 5:24, 5:26, 16:20, 16:35, 16:36, 16:38,

²⁶¹ While this could simply be a political office, many trials and arrests involved *archons*, Acts 3:17, 4:5, 4:8, 4:26, 14:5, 16:19, 23:5.

In what may be the most important reference to witness in the Lukan corpus,²⁶² Acts 1:8 records Jesus telling the eleven remaining apostles, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;²⁶³ and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”²⁶⁴

The UBS 5 reads, ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες, you will be my witnesses. This statement is like that of Isa. 43:12 LXX that one previously notes. That text reads, ὑμεῖς ἐμοὶ μάρτυρες, “You are MY witnesses,” with an emphasis on the emphatic form of μου. Isa. 44:8 also reads, μάρτυρες ὑμεῖς ἐστέ, “You are witnesses,” but lacks the first person personal pronoun, “My.” The phrase may also point to Rev. 2:13, which one discusses later, but the UBS 5 text there is quite different from the one here in Acts 1:8 or the Isaiah texts.

Page intimates that the witness of Acts 1:8 involves three areas to which the book of Acts points in 4:33, 10:39, and 13:31.²⁶⁵ Acts 4:33 NRSV reads, “With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.” Acts 10:39-41 states, “We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.” Lastly, 13:29-31 has, “When they had carried out

²⁶² One assumes Lukan authorship here, although it does not affect the outcome of one’s research. For more on Lukan authorship, see Polhill, *Acts*, 23ff; Kistemaker, *Acts*, 20ff.

²⁶³ Menzies points out that the use of πνεῦμα, spirit, and δύναμις, power, “is also common to Luke,” Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*. (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 108. He also posits that “for Luke, the Holy Spirit is the source of ‘power’,” but that the two terms are not synonyms, *ibid*. Menzies does not draw careful conclusions, however, between the spirit, power, and witness, as his title supposes. Instead, his thesis states that the spirit empowers “God’s people for effective service,” *ibid.*, 44. It appears he seems to conflate “prophetic vocation,” with witness, *ibid.*, 174. While these two functions may be related, they are not, to use his words, synonyms.

²⁶⁴ Parsons understands this verse as a fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to the disciples in John 15:26-27, Parsons, *Acts*, 28. There Jesus tells the disciples He will send the Advocate (H.S.) who will testify on his behalf. Jesus also says the disciples will testify because they have been with him from the beginning.

²⁶⁵ Page, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 76.

everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people.”

In these three verses, the apostles are witness not only to all Jesus did, but more specifically, each passage details the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, while two of them also emphasize his death on a tree as well. While one agrees with Page that these verses are significant in identifying the content of the witness to which Jesus calls the apostles, it is curious that Page does not also point to Acts 1:21-22.²⁶⁶

There, Peter describes the process necessary for selecting someone to replace Judas among the twelve apostles, having previously described the death and curse of Judas for his betrayal. This replacement must have been with the apostles, “...during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us – one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection (Acts 1:21-22).” In keeping with the three passages that Page notes, Acts 1:21-22 records the same idea, that the apostles are witnesses to the resurrection, but these verses record the idea much sooner in the narrative.

To these passages, Polhill adds Acts 2:32, 3:15, and 5:32.²⁶⁷ In Acts 2:32, Peter, during an address on the nature and work of Jesus, declares, “This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.” In the co-text of Acts 3:15, Israelites are flocking to Peter and John in Solomon’s portico of the Jerusalem temple because Peter had healed a crippled beggar. Peter addresses them regarding who Jesus is, stating in verse 15, “...you killed the Author of life,

²⁶⁶ He ignores the idea of witness in his notes covering these verses, perhaps believing he had already done so, *ibid.*, 82.

²⁶⁷ Polhill, *Acts*, 86.

whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.” Finally, in 5:32, it is again Peter speaking of Jesus. The high priest had arrested Peter and the other apostles with him, and imprisoned them. In the night, an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and led them out.

Peter, upon orders from the angel, goes and stands in the temple to speak a story of “this life.” As the high priest and others gather around Peter, he announces, among other things, “The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit ...”

All the passages that Polhill notes also place the death and resurrection of Jesus as the center of the apostolic witness in Acts.²⁶⁸ The final reference to the noun witness in Acts that corresponds to the references of Page and Polhill is Acts 22:15. Paul is standing on the steps to the Roman barracks in Jerusalem and he requests permission from the tribune to speak to the Israelites that have sought Paul’s arrest. Paul then recounts his experiences on the Damascus road, where he saw a bright light, became blind, and heard the Lord speak to him. He then tells how, in his blindness, his companions led him to Damascus where he meets Ananias, who spoke to him from God, telling Paul to regain his sight, and to be a witness “to all the world to what he had seen and heard.”

While the text of Acts does not indicate the exact nature of what it is that Saul/Paul heard and saw, the co-text of Acts 22:14 and 22:18 indicate that he saw the Righteous One and that

²⁶⁸ Mauck, a lawyer, in an interesting perspective on Acts, notes the frequency of the word witness increases after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, John W. Mauck, *Paul on Trial: The Book of Acts as a Defense of Christianity*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 50. In the same place, he argues that prior to these events, Luke prefers the word “disciples.” Luke Timothy Johnson includes a brief discussion on the relationship between the resurrection and the apostolic witness to Jesus in the Gospels in Luke Timothy Johnson, “Does a Theology of the Canonical Gospels Make Sense?,” in *The Nature of New Testament Theology: Essays in Honour of Robert Morgan*, ed. Christopher Rowland and Christopher M. Tuckett (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 100.

Jesus spoke to him. This witness is not identical to the other passages that specifically note the death and resurrection of Jesus, but Jesus does appear to be a part of this witness.

In the same co-text, while Paul is making his speech to the Jews from the steps of the Roman barracks, he tells the Jews about a conversation he had with the Lord. Upon returning to Jerusalem from Damascus after his encounter with the Lord, Paul is in the temple praying and he falls into a trance (Acts 22:17ff). Jesus appears to him, telling him to leave Jerusalem quickly, “because they will not accept your testimony about me.” Paul responds to Jesus, apparently, in knowing fashion, saying, “...while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him.”

It is the only place in Acts where Luke specifically labels Stephen a witness. The clause in which the word witness appears places witness in the role of a genitive modifier. The focus of this dependent, temporal clause appears to be on the object of the verb “shed.”²⁶⁹ They, meaning the Jews in Acts 7 shed the blood of Stephen. Blood is the object of the verb and the words “of Stephen,” further describe the blood. Luke then further describes Stephen as τοῦ μάρτυρος σου, “the witness of you or your witness.” Since the words, Stephen, witness, and you, are all nouns in the genitive case, it is likely that this clause falls into the category of simple apposition. In simple apposition, the nouns in the same case “...clarifies the one named ...”²⁷⁰ In other words, this is not just any Stephen; it is Stephen, the witness of you.

The content of Stephen’s witness is in Acts 7 where Stephen is standing trial before the Sanhedrin, brought there by some members of the synagogue of Freedman. In what appears to be

²⁶⁹ The clause begins with the word ὅτε, when, which is a temporal conjunction, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 677. The NRSV translates the word “while.” The sentence could read, “When they were shedding the blood of Stephen...” The NRSV highlights the simultaneous nature of the death and the approval of Saul. One believes that the Greek is not necessarily highlighting the simultaneous actions, but rather the timeframe of “when” they shed Stephen’s blood.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 96.

a speech testifying in his own defense, Stephen rarely mentions Jesus, except to say in 7:52 that the Jews were betrayers and murderers of the Righteous One.

Stephen is a witness at his own trial and the climax of his testimony is that the Jews have, throughout their history, rejected their leaders (Moses), killed their prophets, and now they can add Jesus to those lists. As many of the other references to witness in Acts refer to Jesus or Jesus' death, this reference is consistent with them. However, Stephen does not mention the resurrection, giving the reference slight variation. It is, however, clearly legal given the trial and death penalty involved.

The other references to *μάρτυς* are unrelated to the idea of Jesus' death and resurrection in a formal sense. In Acts 6:12-13 and the surrounding co-text, some men from the synagogue of Freedman stirred up false witnesses against Stephen, accusing him of blasphemy. This is the story that leads up to Stephen giving his own defense as one just outlined. As a part of their false testimony, some of those who gave this false witness included the statement, "...for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed to us."

While the word witness does not refer to the apostles in this case, this co-text appears in a juridical narrative. Stephen is on trial before the Sanhedrin, witnesses testify against him, and the Jews stone him to death in Acts 7:54ff. It is when the Jews stone Stephen to death that another reference to witness occurs, in Acts 7:58. The witnesses to Stephen's stoning lay their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. This passage is a continuation of the trial of Stephen and the witnesses here appear in a similarly juridical role.

Of note in Stephen's trial is the co-text in Acts 6:12, where it says that the men of the synagogue of the Freedman brought, *ἤγαγον*, Stephen before the Sanhedrin. It is a third person

plural, aorist indicative form of the verb ἄγω, I bring. It appears to be a favorite verb for Luke, as 39 of its 69 NT occurrences are in Luke-Acts.

For Luke in Acts, ἄγω is often a penal term, that is, indicating that people, guards, police, etc. “bring” others, namely followers of Jesus, before various authorities.²⁷¹ Thus, it is a legal term.²⁷² In Acts 5:21, the high priest and Sanhedrin send to the prison for Peter and the apostles “to have them brought,” only to find an angel had led them from the prison during the night. In 5:26, upon realizing Peter and the apostles had escaped and were preaching in the temple, the captain of the temple guard, along with the temple police, went and “brought them, without violence,” before the Sanhedrin. In 5:27, the text repeats that the temple captain “brought them” before the high priest.

In Acts 9:2, Saul is seeking letters to the synagogue in Damascus “so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” A few verses later, in 9:21, after Paul’s Damascus encounter with God, he began proclaiming Jesus as the son of God. The disciples in Damascus, in astonishment, ask, “...has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them [those who invoked the name of Jesus] bound before the chief priests?”

Acts 18:12 records that the Jews of Achaia made a united attack against Paul and brought him before the tribunal. Acts 19:37-38 contains two references to the verb “brought,” which may be legal. In 19:37, the town clerk of Ephesus chastises Demetrius and the artisans, the makers of

²⁷¹ One is aware that not all references to the verb in Acts are legal in nature. Luke apparently uses in other ways as well, but, as one shows, many instances give it a legal sense.

²⁷² The Gospel of Luke does not use the verb exclusively as a penal term, that is, where a court, official, or magistrate brings someone before a trial, as from a prison cell, or similar situation. However, the end of the Luke’s gospel uses this verb to describe the actions of those who “brought” or seized Jesus during his trial, see Luke 22:54, 23:1, 23:32.

the statues of Artemis, because they brought Paul and his companions to him without cause. In 19:38, the clerk then states that if Demetrius wishes to bring charges, the courts are open.

Acts 21:34 has the Roman tribune arresting Paul and bringing him to the barracks because Jerusalem was in uproar over the accusation that Paul brought a Gentile into the temple. In the same co-text, in 22:5, Paul attempts to speak to those in uproar, and reminds them that at one point, he used to bring Christians, bound, back to Jerusalem to punish them.

After Paul makes this speech, the tribune in Acts 22:30 brings Paul before the Sanhedrin. Paul then addresses the council and causes dissention among them over the resurrection of the dead. While the Pharisees and Sadducees are fighting amongst themselves, 23:10 states that the tribune brought Paul back to the barracks. Acts 23:18 and 23:31 also have the tribune bringing Paul somewhere, as does Acts 25:6 and 25:17. Finally, in Acts 25:23, Festus orders some soldiers to bring Paul before him for a trial and so that Festus could write up a list of charges for Paul's impending trial.

Added together with all the other juridical terms in Acts, the verb "brought" is just another reason to believe that many of the witness references in Acts are legal in orientation. Legal representatives of the priests or Romans are often bringing the followers of Jesus, or the Way, in Acts, before the Sanhedrin or other rulers for trial.

In summary of Acts, one concludes with a few comments. While many of the witness references in Acts are juridical in nature, one recognizes that not all references may be legal. Kistemaker, who argues the basic idea of witness in Acts is twofold, reinforces this, writing: "First, it relates to a person who has observed an act or event. Next, it refers to the person who presents a testimony by which he defends and promotes a cause."²⁷³ One believes that

²⁷³ Kistemaker, *Acts*, 54.

Kistemaker's assessment is cautious regarding the legal tone of Acts, following Polhill, who argues witness in Acts has a legal sense.²⁷⁴

Moreover, one is aware that while Acts may have substantial legal references, it does not mean the entire book is a legal genre, or even that this juridical role is the most important theme in the narrative. For instance, Bock cautions against making Acts merely a legal document, noting that while the very title of Acts "highlights the role of witnesses in the book ... God's activity stands at the core of the account."²⁷⁵

Moving from Acts to Romans, Paul, in 1:9, declares, "For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers..." It appears, in some ways to be like the oath taking formulas that one describes elsewhere.²⁷⁶ If so, it would be interesting to determine why it is that Paul opens an epistle by taking an oath declaring God as his witness. Romans is unique in that it contains the only three references to a *συμμαρτυρέω*, in 2:15, 8:16, and 9:1.²⁷⁷

One is also aware that several of the references to *μάρτυς* in the Pauline corpus relate to Paul's invoking God as witness. 2 Cor. 1:23, Phil. 1:8, and 1 Thess. 2:5, are all places where

²⁷⁴ Polhill, *Acts*, 86.

²⁷⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke's Gospel and Acts*. ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2011), 46.

²⁷⁶ Strictly speaking, Paul's confession of God as witness does not fit the general structure of Greek oaths common in Paul's world, in that there is no verb "to swear," and no curse for failing to uphold the oath. Sommerstein shows that the Greek oaths contained three basic parts, a declaration, assertion, or promise, a specification of "a superhuman power or powers as witnesses to the declaration and guarantors of its truth," and the calling down "of a conditional curse on him/herself," Alan H. Sommerstein, "Introduction," in *Oath and State in Ancient Greece*, ed. Alan H. Sommerstein and Andrew J. Bayliss, *Beiträge zur Altertumskunde* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 3-4. In the same place, however, Sommerstein is clear that these types of oaths concern only the context of the *polis* and do not cover oaths between individuals or voluntary promises between private parties. O'Brien, although speaking about a similar oath in Philippians, argues this is an oath, drawing upon the OT tradition as in Josh. 22:27, 1 Sam 12:5, and Jer. 42:5, Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 70.

²⁷⁷ In each instance, the conscience or spirit, something unseen, testifies. According to BDAG, the *συν* prefix "has in the highest degree the effect of strengthening," Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 957. The NT *hapax legomenon* *συμπεμαρτυρέω* is in Hebrews 2:4.

Paul invokes God as witness.²⁷⁸ It is interesting that in each of the four contexts where Paul invokes God as witness, it relates to Paul's coming/visit to a certain church and in two of the four instances, the invocation is a part of the all-important thanksgiving and prayer section (Rom. 1:9, Phil. 1:8).

In Romans 1:9-10, a substantial aspect of Paul's purpose in writing this epistle is his desire that "I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you."²⁷⁹ Paul uses the verb *ἔρχομαι* to describe his coming here. He uses the same verb, together with witness, in 2 Cor. 1:23, where Paul writes, "...I call on God as witness against me: it was to spare you that I did not come again to Corinth."

Phil. 1:8 has Paul writing, "For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus." While this verse does not use the verb *ἔρχομαι* for coming, the passage does use *ἐπιποθέω* to describe Paul's longing to see the Philippians, which is the same word Paul uses in Romans 1:10 to describe Paul's longing to see the Romans. One believes this indicates Paul desires to come to the Philippians but cannot due to his imprisonment (Phil. 1:12).

The last of the four places involving Paul coming to a church is 1 Thess. 2:5. That verse reads, "As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed..." The verb for coming in 1 Thess. 2:5 is a form of *γίνομαι* rather than *ἔρχομαι*.

O'Brien does not believe that these four uses of witness occur "...in a judicial sense of witness to facts, but in a more general sense of his witnessing to the process and motives in

²⁷⁸ Schreiner notes these verses as well, but does not discuss the nature of the word witness, Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 49. Paul uses the verb

²⁷⁹ So Schreiner, *ibid.*, 48.

Paul's inner life ..."²⁸⁰ In opposition to this idea, Morris, following Newman and Nida, argues that Paul appeals to God as witness as in a court.²⁸¹

In addition to these four references to witness that one associates with Paul's potential visits to four churches (Rome, Philippi, Corinth, Thessalonica), one adds 1 Thess. 2:10. One cannot separate 1 Thess 2:10 from 2:5, which one notes previously. In 2:5, while Paul states that his coming to the church did not include greed, flattery, or a need for human praise, he follows up by writing, several verses later in 2:10, writing, "You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers."²⁸²

Wanamaker suggests that Paul invokes these witnesses because he may have been "concerned with criticism directed toward himself and his colleagues."²⁸³ However, he believes it more likely that Paul sets himself up as an example for the Thessalonians to follow his behavior. While Wanamaker does not divulge his opinion on the legal nature of the witness in this verse, he does write that verbs that the NRSV translates as pure, *ὁσῖος*, and upright, *δικαίως*, are "commonly used together to indicate the keeping of divine and human law respectively."²⁸⁴

If Wanamaker is correct, one believes the invocation of witnesses in this verse, whether for literal or metaphorical purposes, may well represent Paul's desire to indicate his faithfulness to God and God's legal expectations of conduct towards others. If someone were to criticize Paul

²⁸⁰ O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 71. Concerning Paul's inner life and God as witness c.f. Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 66.

²⁸¹ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 57. Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*. UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1973), 15.

²⁸² Ellingworth and Nida suggest that one should translate the noun witness more as a verb in this context, using the verb, "know," Paul Ellingworth and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians*. UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1976), 32. Thus, they suggest something like, "you yourselves know, and God knows." They offer little support for this and one is not inclined to follow their suggestion.

²⁸³ Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 104.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

in this context, it would be an accusation that Paul violated God and his moral laws, thus making it a legal context.

Martin agrees that the context of 1 Thess. 2:10 is legal, citing the same two words as Wanamaker, concluding that Paul's behavior is both pious and legal.²⁸⁵ Bruce ties the passage to John 15:26-27 and Acts 5:23 but does not address the legality of the passage.²⁸⁶ All of these commentators write of classic Hellenistic distinctions between the two words for pure and upright, with the first specifying behavior towards God's law and the second toward human law.²⁸⁷ None of them cites the distinction, which is not true of Milligan, who believes the distinction comes from Plato's *Gorgias*, but is uncertain as to the necessity of pressing this distinction in the NT.²⁸⁸

One believes that given the legal nature of witness through the OT and parts of the NT, it is highly plausible that both references to witness in 1 Thess. 2:5 and 2:10 are in a legal context, possibly regarding both religious and civil law. As with other uses, the potential legal nature of the word may lead one to believing that the use of witness in Revelation may be legal as well. That said, the Pauline corpus has other references that are more significant.

The most significant references to *μάρτυς* in the Pauline corpus for the study of Revelation are, in one's opinion, 2 Cor. 13:1 and 1 Tim. 5:19. 2 Cor. 13:1 states, "This is the

²⁸⁵ Michael D. Martin, *1,2 Thessalonians*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 83.

²⁸⁶ Frederick F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 35.

²⁸⁷ Green does not discuss the distinction between pure and upright and his commentary on this text is contradictory. On the one hand, he ties the use of the Thessalonians and God as witnesses to the two to three witness requirement of Deut. 19:15, while on the other hand, argues this is not a juridical text but a character reference, Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: William B. Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 132. One believes Green cannot have it both ways, arguing that Paul roots the text in the law, but saying it is not legal.

²⁸⁸ George Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*. Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London: Macmillan and Co, Ltd, 1908), 24; Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. trans., W.R.M. Lamb, 12 vols., vol. 3 (Medford, MA; Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann Ltd, 1967), 507b.

third time I am coming to you. “Any charge must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses.”²⁸⁹ 1 Tim. 5:19 has, “Never accept any accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.”

Both references rely upon Deut. 17:6 and Deut. 19:15-18 for their tradition of two or three witnesses, although the more likely background is Deut. 19:15-18. Deut. 17:6 is in the context of the death penalty, whereas the later passage of Deut. 19:15 has the more general, “A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offense that may be committed. Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained.” One sustains this conclusion from the Greek wording in each passage as well.

A comparison of 2 Cor. 13:1 and Deut. 19:15 reveals close similarities, with dissimilar words in bold:

ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα (2 Cor. 13:1).

ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ ἐπὶ στόματος τριῶν **μαρτύρων** σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα (Deut. 19:15).²⁹⁰

A comparison with Deut. 17:6, while revealing a similar idea, also makes it clear that Paul draws upon Deut. 19:15 rather than Deut. 17:6, with exact words that Paul and Deuteronomy share in bold:

²⁸⁹ This is another example of Paul using the term witness in the context of a visit to one of the churches in the NT, as one previously writes. One is aware that some scholars believe that 2 Cor. 13:1 may be a part of an independent letter from 2 Cor. 10-13 that Paul or a redactor interposed into 2 Corinthians. For a summary of the debate, see Thomas Schmeller, “No Bridge Over Troubled Water? The Gap Between 2 Corinthians 1-9 and 10-13 Revisited,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 36, no. 1 (2013). Whether this is true or not does not affect the conclusions of this dissertation.

²⁹⁰ Although he does not show a comparison of the texts, Harris is aware of the conclusions one draws on the similarities and scant differences between 2 Cor. 13:1 and Deut. 19:15, Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 906.

ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ τριῶν σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα (2 Cor. 13:1)

ἐπὶ δυσὶν μάρτυρσιν ἢ ἐπὶ τρισὶν μάρτυρσιν ἀποθανεῖται ὁ ἀποθήσκων (Deut. 17:6)

While some of the words are certainly similar, being only different forms of the same roots, the striking similarities of 2 Cor. 13:1 with Deut. 19:15 and the striking dissimilarities between 2 Cor. 13:1 and Deut. 17:6, support that Paul draws upon the more general Deut. 19:15. The death penalty passage is not likely in view.

In comparing possible formal equivalence translations, one could render 2 Cor. 13:1, “on the mouth of two witnesses and three all word (testimony) will stand.” Deut. 19:15 could be, “on the mouth of two witnesses and on the mouth of three witnesses all word (testimony) will stand.” Essentially Paul removes the superfluous “on the mouth of (three) witnesses,” which appears a second time.

Garland believes this passage in 2 Cor. 13:1 has a legal sense, writing that when Paul returned to the Corinthians for his third visit, he would be “putting them on trial.”²⁹¹ He understands that Paul cites Deut. 19:15, and believes that Paul will literally present witnesses against them, perhaps even using Timothy and Titus.²⁹²

Harris too, thinks there is a legal sense to this passage, although he prefers to identify the witnesses as Paul’s previous warnings and visits. The two witnesses are his previous warnings, and the three witnesses are his visits, with the impending third visit of Paul to the church serving as the third witness.²⁹³ Whatever the witnesses may or may not be, both commentators think there is a legal sense to the passage.

²⁹¹ David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 539.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 541.

²⁹³ Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 908. One does not find this view of Harris plausible, and he forces a separation of the two witnesses and three witnesses into categories of two warnings and three visits.

1 Timothy 5:19 has “Never accept an accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.” The beginning of the sentence has no parallel in the legal sections of the OT. However, one will explore the final phrase, regarding the two or three witnesses, as it relates to the OT. A comparison of the phrase in UBS 5 of 1 Tim. 5:19 with the text of Deut. 17:6 and Deut. 19:15 is:

ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ²⁹⁴ ἐπὶ δύο ἢ τριῶν μαρτύρων (1 Tim. 5:19)

ἐπὶ δυσὶν μάρτυρσιν ἢ ἐπὶ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν ἀποθανεῖται ὁ ἀποθήσκων (Deut. 17:6)

ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ ἐπὶ στόματος τριῶν μαρτύρων σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα (Deut. 19:15)

It seems from the comparison that 1 Tim. 5:19 is an allusion to Deut. 19:15, with the NT text removing the reference to, ἐπὶ στόματος, “on the mouth of” when writing of two and three witnesses, as well as removing the additional reference to μαρτύρων, witnesses after the word δύο, two. Instead, it simplifies the text, writing only of two or three witnesses.

Merrill, in writing about Deut. 19:15, notes that Deut. 19:16 continues by indicating that one could, in fact, prosecute a case with only one witness. Deut. 19:16, as one has already previously discussed, writes of the unjust or malicious witness. Merrill states that this person “would undergo as close a scrutiny as the person he had accused.” He further believes that this one person “might be reliable, a contingency not addressed here, but more often than not he would be motivated by malice.”²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ Knight identifies this unusual construction as “...a double (pleonastic) form of negation in post-classical Greek,” George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: William B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 235. Parenthesis are his.

²⁹⁵ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 280.

One disagrees with Merrill, that the witness may be reliable, as the text indicates this witness is unjust or false. There seems to be the idea that when the priests or judges suspect a witness is unjust or false, they make a careful inquiry. The sense of the text is that the tables are turned. Whereas the unjust witness wished to cause harm to the accused, this witness now becomes the subject of an inquiry where the focus is upon the accuser rather than the accused. The punishment for this false witness in Deut. 19:19 is "... then you shall do to the false witness just as the false witness had meant to do to the other."

The author of 1 Timothy does not address this contingency in Deut. 19:16,²⁹⁶ but simply states that Timothy, and probably the church as well, should not even entertain an accusation against an elder without multiple witnesses.²⁹⁷

Hall, concerning Deut. 19:15-20, believes that the requirement of multiple witnesses, "... was designed to prevent a powerful person from taking advantage of a weaker," though he recognizes that this did not prevent Jezebel from bribing two false witnesses against Naboth.²⁹⁸ Moreover, he adds that the purpose of returning the intended punishment upon the false accuser is not only justice, but also deterrence, a view based on Deut. 19:20, which reads, "The rest shall hear and be afraid..."²⁹⁹

One believes the goal of Paul's command in 1 Tim. 5:19 is not only justice, but also deterrence, as Hall suggests for Deuteronomy. Like Deut. 19:20, Paul continues in 1 Tim. 5:20,

²⁹⁶ One assumes this author as Paul, though the authorship of 1 Timothy is not germane to this dissertation.

²⁹⁷ One wonders if the accusation has anything to do with drunkenness. This is due to 1 Tim. 5:23 strangely interrupting Paul's words regarding the elders, to say to Timothy, "No longer drink only water, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." In 1 Tim. 3:3, Paul tells Timothy that a bishop/overseer must not be a drunkard. In 1 Tim. 3:8, he gives the same instruction regarding deacons, that they are not "indulging in much wine." Perhaps someone is accusing an elder of drunkenness in 1 Tim. 5:19ff. Due to this charge, Timothy refuses to drink, and Paul addresses this with Timothy amid instructions on how to handle the accusations against the elder. Of course, given the financial discussion of 1 Tim. 5:17-18, that an elder is worthy of double honor and the worker is worth his wages, it could also be that someone has accused an elder of financial impropriety.

²⁹⁸ Gary Harlan Hall, *Deuteronomy*. The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2000), 303.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 304.

“As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may also stand in fear.” The implication of 1 Tim. 5:20, in one’s opinion, is that should two or three (or more) witnesses bring an accusation, and the elder is guilty, then Timothy or the church should punish the elder publicly.³⁰⁰ The public punishment is a deterrent to others against sin. Whereas Deuteronomy 19:20 directs the deterrence toward the unjust or malicious witness, 1 Timothy directs the deterrence toward other elders.³⁰¹

It is also possible that Hall’s suggestion that the pericope in Deut. 19 is to deter the powerful from taking advantage of the weak is also in view in 1 Timothy 5:21.³⁰² When Paul instructs Timothy, “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I warn you to keep these instructions without prejudice, doing nothing on the basis of partiality,” it could be that Paul is concerned with a powerful individual taking advantage of a weaker one.

Fuller notices these parallels as well, and believes that Paul develops his arguments in 1 Tim. 5:19ff “almost step for step with the development of the argument in in Deuteronomy 19.”³⁰³ He also points out the triad of 1 Tim. 5:21, from which he derives the title of his article, where Paul charges Timothy in the “presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels.” He ties this together with the triad of Deut. 19:17, where the accuser and the accused (in the case of a single, malicious witness), must stand before the Lord and before the priests and before the judges.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ So William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*. ed. Bruce Metzger, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2000), 305.

³⁰¹ Fuller notices the connections of Deut. 19:15-20 and 1 Tim. 5:19-21 as well, J. William Fuller, “Of Elders and Triads in 1 Timothy 5:19-25,” *New Testament Studies* 29, (1983): 260.

³⁰² In this view, one includes 1 Tim. 5:21-25 with 5:19-20. The unity of these verses is a subject of tremendous debate, as Fuller notes, *ibid.*, 258-259.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 260.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

He posits that a comparison of the triad in 1 Tim. 5:21 to Deut. 19:17 recognizes that Paul keeps God in the first position of his triad, just as God is in the first position of the triad of Deut. 19:17. Paul then substitutes Christ for the priests of Deut. 19:17 in the second position, and substitutes the angels for the judges in the third position. He believes the reasons for Paul placing God and Jesus in the first two positions is obvious (assuming the role of Jesus as priest), but believes the angels as judges is more difficult to explain, but are present perhaps due to their role at the judgment.³⁰⁵

One substantial distinction between 1 Tim. 5 and Deut. 19, is obvious, however. In Deuteronomy, the accuser and accused stand before the triad for judgment, whereas in 1 Timothy, it is Timothy that Paul charges before a triad. God, Christ Jesus, and the angels will judge Timothy, not the elder.³⁰⁶

While this passage may not be legal in the sense of a societal, civil trial, it is legal in the sense of the order of the believing community.³⁰⁷ Fuller believes that “trial” is in view, requiring fair examination, witnesses, and discipline.³⁰⁸

In 1 Timothy 5, it may be that two trials or situations are taking place. On the one hand, the accused elder is under scrutiny, and on the other hand, God, Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, are judging Timothy on the nature of his impartial judgment in handling accusations against the elder. Thus, an earthly trial, and perhaps even a heavenly one, are in view. These situations present an orderly, almost legal sense that is consistent with the legal nature of Deut. 19:15ff, to which Paul alludes.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 262.

³⁰⁶ So too Fuller, *ibid.*, 261.

³⁰⁷ Dickie points out that in the later Canons of Alexandria, Christian clerics who approached “an auger, a magician, a wizard, or a sorcerer,” could, on the testimony of three witnesses, be subject to three years of “bitter penance,” Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*, 251.

³⁰⁸ Fuller, “Of Elders and Triads in 1 Timothy 5:19-25,” 262.

1 Pet. 5:1 contains the only reference to *μάρτυς*, in Peter's corpus. There, Peter calls himself a witness to Christ's sufferings. Its legal context is ambiguous. However, one also notes that Peter uses two *hapax legomena* in his first epistle regarding witness. In 1 Pet. 1:11, Peter notes that the Spirit of Christ within the prophets "... testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory." The word for testified in advance is *προμαρτύρομαι*.

Similarly, in 1 Pet. 5:12, Peter also uses *ἐπιμαρτυρέω*, to describe the testimony that he writes in the epistle as "the true grace of God." The use of the word "true" in the near co-text of witness and testimony may indicate a subtle contrast to false witnesses.

As with 2 Cor. 13:1 and 1 Tim. 5:19, Hebrews 10:28 is a passage bearing similarity to Rev. 11:3-4, in that it too includes a reference to two witnesses. The NRSV has, "Anyone who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy 'on the testimony of two or three witnesses'." In the context of an argument from the lesser to the greater, Paul indicates that if one dies without mercy for violating the Mosaic law, how much greater punishment will one receive for rejecting the Son of God.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁹ Guthrie agrees this is an *a fortiori* argument and calls it an allusion to Deut. 17:2-7. He also believes the portion of Hebrews 13:8 which references "without mercy" is an allusion to Deut. 13:8, George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 979. Lane sees this verse as an allusion to Deut. 17:6 as well, and as a conflation with Deut. 13:8, William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, ed. Bruce Metzger, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 293. Lane also notes the *a fortiori* argument, writing, "Contempt for a privileged relationship with God through Christ in the new covenant will involve retribution more terrible than the death penalty attached to violation of the law," *ibid.* Beale defines an allusion as "... a brief expression consciously intended by an author to be dependent on an OT passage," and notes that in an allusion, in contrast to a quotation, "the OT wording is not reproduced directly as in a quotation," Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*, 31. Moyise divides NT uses of the OT into three categories, quotations, allusions, and echoes. He does not define these as clearly as one would like, writing that allusions are "less precise" than quotations, "...picking up on a few key words and usually woven into the new composition," Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction*, 6. In the same place, Moyise also recognizes the debate surrounding Beale's use of the words "conscious intention." He also defines an echo as an allusion that "... is so slight that conscious intention is unlikely," *ibid.* Quotations are self-defining, but often contain an introductory formula, so Dennis L. Stamps, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament as a Rhetorical Device: A Methodological Proposal," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, McMaster

A comparison of Deut. 17:6, 19:15 and the UBS 5 of the requisite phrase in Hebrews 10:28 is:

ἐπὶ δυσὶν ἢ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν ἀποθνήσκει (Heb. 10:28)

ἐπὶ δυσὶν μάρτυρσιν ἢ ἐπὶ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν ἀποθανεῖται ὁ ἀποθήσκων (Deut. 17:6)

ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ ἐπὶ στόματος τριῶν μαρτύρων σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα (Deut. 19:15)

It is apparent that Heb. 10:28 is not an exact quote from Deut. 17:6, but it is also evident that Hebrews draws upon Deut. 17:6, rather than Deut. 19:15.³¹⁰ The author's warning of the death penalty in Hebrews due to violating the law of Moses is consistent with the requirement of two or three witnesses for the death penalty in the OT, particularly Deut. 17:6.³¹¹ Westcott, in noting the parallel with Deut. 17:6, believes this section is a "... specific warning against idolatry,"³¹² though others prefer to write of apostasy.³¹³

Johnson notes that to this statement concerning witnesses, the Hebrew author adds the statements in 10:30, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay. And again, The Lord will judge his

New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 12. Moyise, oddly in one's opinion, does not address Hebrews 10:28 in his discussion of the Hebrew writer's use of the OT. Neither does Köstenberger, although his subsection on Hebrews is much smaller, Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Use of Scripture in the Pastoral and General Epistles and the Book of Revelation," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, McMaster New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 239-241. By all of these definitions, Heb. 10:28 is an allusion to Deut. 17:6, since the wording is not exact, but substantially similar.

³¹⁰ This is not lost on Ellingworth, who posits that the author of Hebrews "was drawn to it [Deut. 17:6] because of its reference to apostasy," Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 537.

³¹¹ Ellingworth, regarding this passage, argues that "Hebrews' main interest is in the provision of the death penalty ..." *ibid.* He continues by noting the other side of the lesser to the greater argument, stating, there is a punishment worse than death, *ibid.*, 538.

³¹² Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*. Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London: Macmillan, 1903), 331.

³¹³ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*. ed. C. Clifton Black, M. Eugene Boring, and John T. Carroll, 1st ed., The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 263-264; Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 293.

people.”³¹⁴ Coupled with Hebrews 10:26-27, which proclaims, “For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.” The statement about two or three witnesses fits in between these two verses on judgment and one believes solidifies the legal nature of the passage. God will preside over a fearful judgment for those who are apostate from Jesus Christ.

The clause, “The Lord will judge his people,” is an avowal of vindication, quoted from Deut. 32:36, where the clause that follows it is and “... have compassion on his servants.”³¹⁵ The Hebrew writer appears to present the opposite outcomes of the judgment with his statements. The “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” is a threat, while, “The Lord will judge his people,” is a promise. In any case, the judgment here is a courtroom scene where God is judge and the reference to witnesses in both the OT and in Heb. 10:28 is legal in connotation.

Before moving on to an assessment of witness in the Book of Revelation, it is important to note that to this point, the use of the word witness in the OT and NT is overwhelming legal. Witnesses testify in legal hearings, mostly with respect to a variety of covenant violations in the OT, and apparent covenant violations in the NT as well. Although the covenant theme in the NT is not as explicit, NT witnesses appear to stand as witnesses in the church and perhaps before the Lord as well. With this in mind, one anticipates a legal connotation to the word in Revelation as well.

Interestingly, the use of witness to this point in scripture, while being legal, does not often appear in figurative, metaphorical ways, although such uses do occur. Thus, the conceptual

³¹⁴ Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, 266. Johnson correctly notes the connection of this phrase in Heb. 10:30 with Deut. 32:36, though he does not mention that the Hebrew writer quotes exactly the phrase in Greek.

³¹⁵ Johnson also notes that this quote is in Psalm 134:14, and concludes with a similar clause, “the Lord will comfort his people,” *ibid*.

world of the law and the covenant are present, but using this conceptual world in metaphorical ways, is rarer. One believes then, that as other metaphors in John are novel, John may be using lampstands and olive trees in conceptual ways regarding the legal world that are new to his readers.

However, while using these conceptual fields in ways that may be new, they are quite plausible as metaphors, as one will seek to demonstrate. One will argue that John overlays the legal world of witness with the concepts of lampstands and olive trees in Revelation, and that while these metaphors may be new, they are consistent with similar associated common places in the ANE. That said, one moves to witness in Revelation.

While the theme of witness in the Book of Revelation is not overwhelming by the number of times the word *μάρτυς* or its cognates appear, it is significant in that Revelation contains the second-most number of references to *μάρτυς* in the New Testament, with Acts being first. Since there are only 35 references to *μάρτυς*, Revelation's five references make up 14% of NT uses.

The verb *μαρτυρέω*, to witness, shares the same root with *μάρτυς* and appears in the NT more than twice as often at 76 instances. However, it only appears four times in Revelation, in 1:2, 22:16, 22:18, and 22:20, totaling 5% of NT uses. Three of the four examples are in the same pericope.

Where Revelation does stand out, particularly if one holds the view that the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John, and Revelation share the same author, is the use of the word, *μαρτυρία*, testimony.³¹⁶ It appears 37 times in the UBS 5, with nine in Revelation, for 24% or

³¹⁶ Boxall writes, "Bearing witness is a crucial activity in the Apocalypse, and links it the Fourth Gospel," Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 25.

nearly a quarter of all cases. As one already noted previously, *μαρτυρία* appears 14 times in John's Gospel, six times in 1 John, and once in 3 John. If the author is the same, and it is not important to the argument if he is, then the author John accounts for 30 of 37 uses, or 81%.

Regardless, Revelation accounting for a quarter of all uses of testimony in the NT adds to the *μάρτυς* milieu in the book. *Μαρτυρία* is in Rev. 1:2, 1:9, 6:9, 11:7, 12:11, 12:17, 19:10 (2x), and 20:4.³¹⁷ This emphasis on testimony causes Bauckham to write that the character of Revelation is, "...a prophetic critique of the political idolatry and economic oppression intrinsic to Roman power in the late first century, and as a call to its readers to bear witness to the truth and righteousness of God in the specific circumstances ..."³¹⁸

In attempting to frame an examination of witness in Revelation, one also notes that all five uses of the noun witness in Revelation refer either to Jesus or to witnesses who belong to or testify for Jesus.³¹⁹ Due to the association of the witnesses with Jesus, the narrative surrounding these witnesses portray them from the perspective of Jesus and is overwhelming positive. Unlike other references in the OT and NT to malicious witnesses or unjust witnesses, Revelation does not use the word *μάρτυς* to describe such witnesses.

Of note is that the first three references to witness in Revelation focus upon Jesus and Antipas as faithful witnesses. Rev. 1:5 refers to Jesus as the "faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth," while Rev. 3:14 records a similar title, calling

³¹⁷ A similar word for witness, *μαρτύριον*, is in Rev. 15:5 referring to the tent of witness, "After this I looked, and the temple of the tent of witness in heaven was opened..." Bauckham wonders if there is any significance to the word *Ἰησοῦς*, Jesus, appearing seven times relating to the word "testimony." Since *Ἰησοῦς* occurs fourteen times, 7x2, and two is the number of witness from Rev. 11:3, he posits the use of Jesus fourteen times is intentional, Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, 34. If true, it could be an example of an implicit double heptad.

³¹⁸ Ibid., xiii.

³¹⁹ Rev. 1:5, 2:13, 3:14, 11:3, and 17:6.

Jesus, “the faithful witness.” In Rev. 2:13, nestled in between the references to Jesus, Jesus calls Antipas, “my witness, my faithful one...”

The UBS 5 of Revelation 1:5 records Jesus as, “ὁ μάρτυς, ὁ πιστός.” The same construction is in Rev. 3:14. However, Rev. 3:14 adds the title, “ὁ ἀμήν,” “the Amen,” to the description. The NRSV and many other English Bibles translate the first construction as “the faithful witness.” However, one could also translate it as, “the truthful witness.”³²⁰

The UBS 5 records Rev. 2:13 as reading, “ὁ μάρτυς μου ὁ πιστός μου.” It is an identical construction to that of Jesus, except that Jesus adds the words, “my,” to the end of the description. One could translate it, “my witness, my faithful one,” or, “my witness, my truthful one,” or simply, “my faithful/truthful witness.”³²¹

Bowersock argues the phrase, “faithful witness,” may, “even reflect John’s deep knowledge of classical Greek since that expression can be traced back to the poet Pindar.”³²² The reference is to Pindar’s Pythian Ode 1, line 88, which reads πολλοὶ μάρτυρες ἀμφοτεροῖς πιστοί, and which Sandy translates as, “... many trusty witnesses to thy deeds.”³²³ It is an overstatement

³²⁰ On an Egyptian mortuary stele for Sehetepibre, a servant of Amenemhet III, Sehetepibre calls himself, “a truthful witness like Thoth,” James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*. ed. William Rainey Harper, 5 vols., Ancient Records, vol. 1: The First to the Seventeenth Dynasties (Chicago; London; Leipzig: The University of Chicago Press; Luzac & Co.; Otto Harrassowitz, 1906), 325. Boylan includes the hieroglyphs of three Egyptian epithets for Thoth, the witness, the true witness, and the true witness of the gods, in Patrick Boylan, *Thoth, The Hermes of Egypt: A Study of Some Aspects of Theological Thought in Ancient Egypt*. (London; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Copenhagen; New York; Toronto; Melbourne; Cape Town; Bombay; Calcutta; Madras; Shanghai: Oxford University Press, 1922), 187. A similar idea is in Epodes V of Horace, where Canidia invokes the two witnesses of Diana and Night. The text reads, “*o rebus meis non infideles arbitrae*,” “EPODON Q. HORATII FLACCI LIBER” <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/horace/ep.shtml#IV> (accessed 19 April 2017). Luck translates this phrase as, “You are the faithful witnesses of my doings,” Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, 111. However, Wickham translates it as, “...witnesses not unloyal to my purposes,” Horace, *Horace for English Readers*. trans., E.C. Wickham (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1903), 144.

³²¹ Similar to this idea of faithful witness, Philo calls God a “trustworthy witness,” using the construction ἀψευδεστάτου μάρτυρος, Philo, “The Special Laws, IV,” §32. Yonge translates this as “infallible witness,” Philo, “The Special Laws, IV,” 619.

³²² Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 14.

³²³ Pindar, *The Odes of Pindar: Including the Principal Fragments*. ed. T.E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse, trans., Sir John Sandy, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1915), 164-165. While the term “faithful

to say John had a deep knowledge of classical Greek based on such a small sample size of classical literature, but having the Greek words for witness and truthful/faithful in such close proximity is not common prior to John.³²⁴

Nonetheless, there are universal, cultural norms upon which John may draw for the concept of faithful/truthful witnesses, as well as OT norms that better fit the context and co-text of John's message.³²⁵ For instance, Bowersock could have pointed to Prov. 14:25 or Jer. 42:5 (LXX 49:5), OT references that include "faithful/truthful witness," which ones notes above, and these would be a likelier source for John given the extensive evidence of OT use in The Apocalypse.³²⁶ One believes the emphasis on faithful witness in these instances is likely an

witness" does not appear, a similar idea of positive witness is in Plutarch's description of the battle of Plataea. He describes the residents of Glaucus in Corinth as "right noble witnesses," κάλλιστον μάρτυν, John Maxwell Edmonds, ed. *Lyra Graeca: Being the Remains of all the Greek Lyric Poets From Eumelus To Timotheus Excepting Pindar*, ed. E. Capps, D.L. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, III vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. II (London; New York: William Heinemann; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1924), 334-335. One prefers the translation of "beautiful witness."

Josephus writes of a faithful witness, μαρτυρεῖν τοῖς ἁγίοις, when he retells the story of Moses taking the advice of his father-in-law to appoint men to help him judge. Josephus says Moses recorded Raguel as the inventor of this system by writing down his name and this record serves as a faithful witness, Henry St. John Thackeray, *Josephus with an English Translation*. 9 vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 4 (London; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1961), 352-353.

³²⁴ The combination of μάρτυς πιστός appears regularly in Christian literature after John as a search of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae reveals, e.g. Didymus Caecus de trinitate, Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*. Graeca (Paris: Migne, 1857-1866), vol. 39, p. 601, line 30.

³²⁵ One already includes several references in the footnotes above regarding ANE passages referring to faithful/truthful witnesses. The wording does not need to be exact as other synonyms may communicate the same idea. Although the text is approximately 50 to 70 years after John, Dio's Roman History, Book 13, writes of Furius, who takes two of his lieutenants, Pompeius and Metellus, to serve as "sure witnesses," τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῆς ἀρετῆς," to his deeds, Dio Cassius, *Dio's Roman History*. ed. E.H. Warmington, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann, Ltd., 1970), 421. Since the context is militaristic, the use of τῆς ἀρετῆς is appropriate, since the word means "uncommon character," or in a military context, perhaps valorous character, Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 130. A much earlier example of similarity, using potential synonyms, is Euripides, who writes in one fragment about Hypsipyle being a prophet to come and testify before the Queen, so that she may accept the prophet's word as "true witness," μάρτυρα σαφέστατον, Denys Lionel Page, ed. *Greek Literary Papyri*, ed. T.E. Page et al., 2 vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1 (London; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann LTD; Harvard University Press, 1942), 98-99.

³²⁶ 4Q381, Non-Canonical Psalms B, has a "reliable witness," Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. 2 vols., vol. 2 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1998), 763.

attempt to characterize Jesus and Antipas as reliable witnesses as opposed to false witnesses, another portrait from the OT. They are reliable unto death.³²⁷

Rev. 11:3 has, “And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth.”³²⁸ The UBS 5 reads καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυσὶν μάρτυσιν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἐξήκοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκους.³²⁹ The use of δυσὶν, two, a dative plural masculine adjective, is relatively uncommon in the Bible,³³⁰ and the occurrence of δυσὶν μάρτυσιν is rarer still.

Its only appearance in the LXX is Deut. 17:6, and it only occurs here in Rev. 11:3, and in Hebrews 10:28.³³¹ One demonstrated in the Pauline corpus above that Paul likely chooses Deut. 19:15 over Deut. 17:6 when writing of two witnesses because he was not writing of the death penalty. However, the only two explicit uses of δυσὶν μάρτυσιν outside of Revelation 11:3 is in the context of the death penalty, in Deut. 17:6, and in Hebrews 10:28.

Such a highly poetic combination of words, appearing only three times in the biblical corpus, is noteworthy. It leads one to believe that the role of the two witnesses in Rev. 11:3 is

³²⁷ That Jesus and Antipas, as well as other biblical witnesses, are willing to die for their witness, is an example of their commitment to the testimony they give. One cannot dissuade them from their witness. This contrasts with other witnesses such as those Cicero recognizes are stupid, biased, and unreliable witnesses. Cicero argues that witticisms are a good method in attacking such an enemy and ruffling their testimony, Cicero, *Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes: De Oratore in Two Volumes*. ed. E.H. Warmington, trans., E.W. Sutton, XXVIII vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. III (London; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1967), 367.

³²⁸ For the wearing of sackcloth in mourning, grief, and lament, see Michael L. Barré, "Wandering About' as Topos of Depression in Ancient Near Eastern Literature and in the Bible," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 60, no. 3 (July 2001): 181-182; Morris Zastrow Jr., "Dust, Earth, and Ashes as Symbols of Mourning among the Ancient Hebrews," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 20, (1899).

³²⁹ One notes the use of homoioteleuta in the description of the characters and their task, δυσὶν μάρτυσιν μου καὶ προφητεύσουσιν.

³³⁰ For the 11 instances in the OT, see Gen. 9:22, Gen. 40:2, Deut. 3:21, Deut. 17:6, Deut. 31:4, Josh. 2:10, Josh. 6:22, Ruth 1:2, 1 Kgs. 2:5, 1 Kgs. 2:32, 2 Kgs. 5:23, in *Septuaginta: SESB Edition*. For the six NT occurrences, read Matt. 6:4, Mark 16:12, Luke 12:52, Luke 16:13, Heb. 10:28, and Rev. 11:3, in Aland, Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini, and Metzger, eds., *The Greek New Testament*.

³³¹ Contra Boxall, who sees the background of this passage as Deut. 19:15, Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 163.

legal.³³² One has demonstrated that the use of the word “witness” throughout the OT and NT has a high probability of legal connotation and when one finds a rare combination of words such as *δυσὶν μάρτυσιν*, which only occur in the legal context of the death penalty, it leads one to believe the function of the witnesses here is to serve as witnesses in a trial ending in the death penalty.³³³

Moreover, the context of Deut. 17:6 is a trial regarding those who serve other gods. Israel is to stone such persons to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses. This bears significance for the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3. In Rev. 11:7, after the two witnesses finish their prophesying, the beast from the abyss kills them. The beast kills them because their testimony attacks its idolatrous ways.

Rev. 13:4 records that the whole earth worships the dragon and the beast from the abyss, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?” Although not occurring in an OT covenantal context or an Israelite context, it is an obvious example of violating the commands of Deut. 17:1-6, where one is not to worship anyone or anything other than God, and the penalty for doing so is death. The whole earth, including the beast from the abyss, are therefore subject to death.

Rev. 13:14 has the second beast, the one from the earth, commanding the people of the earth to make an image of the first beast, the one from the sea. John later identifies the first beast as a king or kingdom, and the second beast as a false prophet.³³⁴ The second beast gives breath to

³³² So Bauckham, who writes, “...he [John] has chosen to have only two witnesses, according to the biblical requirement for valid witness,” Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, 165. See also Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 163.

³³³ Koester argues that the appearance of two witnesses in Rev. 11:3 indicates “valid testimony,” as in both Deut. 17:6, and Deut. 19:15, Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 497.

³³⁴ There is at least one source that records that such images of kings served as witnesses. Shalmaneser III writes that after destroying the Hattians, along the Upper Sea of Amurri, he made and set an image of his royal self by the sea “as a witness of my name for all time to come,” Daniel David Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*. ed. James Henry Breasted, Ancient Records, vol. 1: Historical Records of Assyria From the Earliest Times to Sargon (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926), 216. That a royal image could serve as a

the image of the first beast so that it speaks, and the second beast orders killed all who do not worship the image of the first beast. This idolatrous image recalls the story of Nebuchadnezzar and his image from Daniel 3.

Rev. 20:10, 20:14, and 21:8 all indicate that the death penalty is the outcome for those who have not worshipped God. God casts the dragon, the beast, the false prophet (the beast from the earth in Rev. 13), and all idolaters, into the lake of fire, which is the second death. One believes that the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3 are bearing witness at this trial concerning idolatry, and the penalty is death. Out of revenge for this testimony or to silence the witnesses, the beast from the abyss kills the two witnesses.

Rev. 20, particularly 20:4, 20:12, 20:13 records a great courtroom/judgment scene. In 20:4, there are people seated on thrones, with the authority to judge. In 20:12, the dead, great and small, stand before the throne. The one on the throne opens the books of judgment,³³⁵ as well as the book of life, and he judges the dead according to their deeds.³³⁶ In the same section, 20:13 says the sea, Death, and Hades, all give up their dead and the one on the throne judges them as well.³³⁷

witness may inform the background of the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3 against the two beasts of Rev. 13. The image of the first beast is a witness to idolatry and the two witnesses testify against such idolatry.

³³⁵ The word, βιβλίον, book or books, is overwhelmingly a word of the Apocalypse, occurring 23 times in the UBS 5, compared with 34 total references in the NT, for 68% of all uses. The word is in Rev. 1:11, 5:1, 5:2, 5:3, 5:4, 5:5, 5:8, 5:9, 6:14, 10:8, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12 (3x), 21:27, 22:7, 22:9, 22:18 (2x), 22:19 (2x). With regard to the references in Rev. 5, Aune argues this is similar to the princeps holding a *libellus*, "a petition or letter," David E. Aune, "The Influence of the Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John," *Biblical Research* 28, (1983): 9.

³³⁶ Aune sees much of Revelation in light of the "Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial," arguing that John's portrayal of the throne room of God is a parody of the Roman imperial court, *ibid.*, 5. He goes on to argue that the primary role of the Roman emperor was to dispense justice and he sees this as God's primary role in Revelation, *ibid.*, 8-9.

³³⁷ Bandy argues convincingly that the divine courtroom motif begins in Rev. 4-5. He argues four points. First, he believes the throne in Rev. 4-5 "functions as an assize whereby he dispenses justice throughout the cosmos." Additionally, the "entourage" surrounding the throne embodies the divine council. He states the scroll "represents a legal document pertaining to judgment," and lastly believes chapter 5 involves the enthronement of a worthy judge to open the scroll," Alan S. Bandy, "The Prophetic Lawsuit in the Book of Revelation: An Analysis of the Lawsuit Motif in Revelation with Reference to the Old Testament" (Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, May 2007), 230-231.

The word in Rev. 20:4 for judgment, *κρίμα*, is also in 17:1, where the context is the judgment of the great whore. Rev. 18:20 also describes the judgment of the great whore, although in this passage the metaphor shifts from whore to city, in that Babylon receives judgment from God against her because of the saints.

A similar word for judgment is *κρίσις*, which appears four times, one each in Rev. 14:7, 16:7, 18:10, and 19:2. In 14:7, an angel announces in a loud voice that the hour of God's judgment has come, and commands all peoples, nations, tribes, and languages, to worship the one who made heaven and earth. Rev. 16:7 has the altar crying out, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just!"³³⁸ Rev. 18:10 records that Babylon's judgment came in one hour, that is, it was swift. Finally, Rev. 19:2 repeats a similar idea to 16:7. There, the great multitude cries out that God's judgments are true and just, and he has judged the great whore.

John uses the verb, to judge, *κρίνω*, nine times, one each in Rev. 6:10, 11:18, 16:5, 18:8, 18:20, 19:2, 19:11, 20:12, and 20:13. In every case, God is the judge, except 19:11, where the rider on the white horse, whose name is Faithful and True, is also a judge.

Of interest for the two-witnesses' metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4, is that after the beast from the abyss kills the two witnesses, God raises them up, and they ascend to heaven in Rev. 11:11-14. The twenty-elders then declare in 11:18, "The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the

³³⁸ This is an example of a suspended metaphor, since the vehicle is present but not the tenor. The criterion of incongruence exists in that altars do not have voices, cannot cry aloud, or speak. This may also be an acclamation, like those in Rev. 4-5. Such acclamations, according to Aune, were common in the Hellenistic-Roman ruler cult ideology, and the acclamations of Revelation parallel those of the first-century political climate. Aune, "The Influence of the Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John," 16-19. Seal presents compelling arguments for the background of Roman acclamations to those of the Apocalypse. He argues that in the case of the emperor, acclamations attested to his legitimacy, David Seal, "Shouting in the Apocalypse: The Influence of First-Century Acclamations on the Praise Utterances in Revelation 4:8 and 11," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51, no. 2 (June 2008): 344.

time for judging (κρίνω) the dead...” Rev. 11:18 is a part of the seventh trumpet, and, as part of the pattern of seven seals, trumpets, bowls, etc. it is a description of the end of history or the world. The work of the two witnesses seems to be in direct correlation with the judgment of God, which is a legal matter.

A corollary to the image of judgment is the idea of truth. In 16:7 and 19:2, John records God’s judgments as true. In a similar context, 19:11 has the rider on the white horse called Faithful and True. All three references use a form of the adjective ἀληθινός, true or truthful.³³⁹ This adjective occurs 28 times in the UBS 5, with ten of them in Revelation, or 36%. Rev. 3:7 describes Jesus as the true one, and 3:14 has Jesus as the faithful and true witness. Rev. 6:10 has God as holy and true, the one who will judge and avenge the blood of the saints. Rev. 15:3 has God’s ways as just and true, with 15:4 writing of God’s judgments.

One has already noted the adjective in 16:7, 19:2, and 19:11. However, amid these is also 19:9, where an angel speaks of the “true words of God.” In 21:5, the one seated on the throne says, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 22:6 has the angel saying to John, “These words are trustworthy and true...”

As the last several references to “true” indicate, John tends to pair the words “true” and “trustworthy.” The UBS 5 in these references uses πιστός, faithful, or trustworthy. As one notes above, John pairs this word with witness in 1:5, 2:13, and 3:14. Since Rev. 19:11 calls the rider on the white horse, Faithful and True, and this rider is Jesus, it is plausible to connect 19:11 to 1:5 and 3:14, which both refer to Jesus as the Faithful witness. Rev. 21:5 and 22:6 both refer to

³³⁹ One admits that given the prevalence of the adjective, it is unexpected and surprising that the most common noun for truth in the NT, ἀλήθεια, occurring 109 times in UBS 5, does not occur in the Apocalypse. It is also noteworthy that another adjective with a similar root, ἀληθής, does not occur in Revelation. If the Gospel of John and Revelation share an author, this is particularly remarkable given that John has 14 references or 54% of all NT uses of the word. All this seems to indicate a preference for ἀληθινός in the Apocalypse as opposed to other vocabulary.

faithful words, which seem to fit the pattern of faithful witness. One has already noted above that there is evidence in the OT that the word πιστός, when combined with witness, is a polemic against false witnesses, as in Prov. 14:25 and Jer. 42:5 (LXX 49:5).

These words for “truth,” “true,” or “faithful,” combine with “witness,” “testimony,” and “judgment,” to portray a concern for true or faithful witnesses and testimony, as opposed to false or malicious witnesses, in what is likely juridical language. If Lincoln sees the words for witness, judgment, and truth, as indicators of a divine courtroom in John’s Gospel, to the extent he calls this “forensic language,” there is no reason why this could not also be true in Revelation.³⁴⁰

One last factor contributes to this opinion of juridical language. In Rev. 11:3, not only does it use two witnesses, δυσὶν μάρτυσιν, but the speaker, presumably Jesus adds the genitive first person personal pronoun, μου, my, indicating they are perhaps like Jesus and Antipas.

The reference to μαρτύρων in Revelation is in Rev. 17:6, where John has a vision of the great whore of Babylon. His vision is in the context of judgment. In Rev. 17:1, one of the angels who had one of the seven bowls (of God’s wrath) says to John, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great whore who is seated on many waters...”³⁴¹ When John sees the woman, he recounts numerous descriptions. The description in 17:6 is most poignant for one’s purposes, as John writes, “And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus.”³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Lincoln, “A Life of Jesus as Testimony: The Divine Courtroom and the Gospel of John,” 146-148. Trites includes these words as those with “forensic overtones,” Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, 161. His list of words he deems forensic is much larger. One prefers the conservative approach here as some of his words do not appear directly related to a courtroom or legal scene and he gives no evidence for his assertions.

³⁴¹ As is typical for John, the word “waters” is the vehicle of a suspended metaphor in which he later reveals the tenor. In Rev. 17:15, the angel says to John, “The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.”

³⁴² Beale essentially sees the two groups of believers as the same, writing, “the καί [and] is best taken as explanatory. Consequently, true ‘saints’ are those who are ‘witnesses to Jesus. With ‘to’ ... as objective genitive,” Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 860. In the same place, Beale also suggests the relationship of witnesses and Jesus could be a genitive of possession, Jesus’ witnesses. Boxall understands the καί

The entire sentence is a complex metaphor, since there are multiple metaphors present. The first is a suspended metaphor, with the word, “woman,” functioning as the vehicle. Rev. 17:18 reveals the tenor of the suspended metaphor, “The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

The word drunk in 17:6 is likely a verbal metaphor, and it serves as the focus of the sentence, with the surrounding words functioning as the frame.³⁴³ It is metaphorical because one associates drunkenness with wine, not human blood.³⁴⁴ This incongruity creates a gruesome image of the woman, a savage, cannibalistic or vampire-like image of a blood drinker.³⁴⁵ In the co-text, John plays on the wine imagery. In 17:2, the people of the earth become drunk on the wine of fornication that takes place between the kings of the earth and the woman. In 17:4, the woman holds a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication.

The frame of the metaphor could also extend in Rev. 18, for the angel there recounts the events of Rev. 17, declaring in 18:3, “... all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” In 18:6, when the angel announces God judgment on her, he says, “...mix a double draught for her in the cup she mixed.”³⁴⁶ While not using the words “wine” or “drink,”

similarly, calling it epexegetical, Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 243. So too, Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 937. An epexegetical rendering sees witnesses as a further explanation of saints.

³⁴³ Recall that Black calls the central verb of a verbal metaphor the focus, with the remaining sentence as the frame, Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 28. Koester identifies the sentence as a metaphor for murder, Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 676. Beale writes that the “metaphor of intoxication with blood is developed from the LXX of Isa. 34:5-7; 49:26; and Jer. 26:10 ...,” Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 861. So too, Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 937.

³⁴⁴ Koester believes the comparison exists as one of “red wine,” Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 675. One would clarify that the comparison is due to both being “liquids,” bearing similar appearances, and in some way, both are within a container, the skin of the grape, or the “skin” of a body. Undergirding this view is the use of the phrase “blood of grapes,” as in Gen. 49:11 NRSV and Deut. 32:14 NRSV. Aune sees the metaphor as one based on resemblance as well, Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 938.

³⁴⁵ Koester includes a historical note in his commentary on this passage that the emperor Tiberias “was said to have drunk blood as greedily as wine,” Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 676. Similarly, Aune records that Mark Antony, before the battle of Actium, was “drunk with the blood of his compatriots,” Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 937. While these may be true, the metaphor does not require a specific historical constituent.

³⁴⁶ The NRSV takes some creative liberty with “double draught” given the cup and wine imagery. Unless there is some historical evidence to demonstrate otherwise, which one was unable to find, wine is generally not “draught.”

Rev. 18:24 says of the woman, or the great city, "... in you was found the blood of the prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on earth." Beale even includes Rev. 19:2 in the frame (though not using this language), where the multitude in heaven rejoices over God's judgment, saying, "... he has avenged on her the blood of his servants."³⁴⁷

This Rev. 18 passage is likely a recapitulation of Rev. 14:8, where a second angel says, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Continuing in 14:10, an angel declares, "... they [those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads and or on their hands] will also drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." In other words, since the peoples of the earth like to drink the wine of the wrath of fornication, they will then drink the wine of the wrath of God.

Rev. 16:1-6 also uses the drinking of blood imagery as it relates to the death of the saints and prophets to drinking judgment. Chapter 16 begins the narrative of the pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath. When the third angel pours out his bowl in 16:4, the rivers and springs of water become blood. With this bowl, an angel declares, "... because they [those that had the mark of the beast and worshipped its image] shed the blood of saints and prophets, you have given them blood to drink."³⁴⁸ The response of the altar in 16:7, which one already noted, indicates this is a judgment text, and that God's judgments are just and true.

Moreover, the UBS 5 has διπλώσατε τὰ διπλά. A rigid reading may be, "double the double (two-fold)." BDAG calls this an idiom meaning, "pay back double," Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 252.

³⁴⁷ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 860.

³⁴⁸ Given that 16:6 refers to the blood of the saints and prophets, and 18:24 has the blood of the prophets and saints, Aune believes that one should equate the prophets from these references to the witnesses in Rev. 17:6, seeing them all as parallels, Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 937.

It is interesting in the co-text that John implies the woman has a cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication, and then says she is drunk on the blood of the saints and witnesses. The assumed killing of the saints and witnesses is therefore one of her abominations and one of her impurities.³⁴⁹ In becoming drunk, the focus of the metaphor, the implication is that her killing is excessive. The complex metaphor reveals a great city, whose wickedness is such that it excessively kills the saints and witnesses to Jesus. The judgment of this city is at hand, and chapter 18 commences the judgment, with an angel crying out, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.”

The judgment in chapters 17-18, combined with parallel judgment images from chapters 14 and 16, indicate this is a legal text. God is judge and his judgments are just. Boxall, writing of the judgment in chapter 17, sees the reference in 14:8 and 16:19 as preparatory for this section, which he sees as “the detailed climax to those bowls of judgment: the condemnation of the great prostitute...”³⁵⁰ For Boxall, Revelation’s portrayal of the downfall of the prostitute, “sets before its hearers the full drama and pathos of the Day of Judgment and the salvation that Day brings for God’s people.”³⁵¹ If correct, it is hard to see the Day of Judgment in less than legal terms, given the great court judgment scene of later chapters.

³⁴⁹ Beale writes the contents of the cup, “...included figuratively the saint’s blood,” Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 860. He sees this as persecution and that “all forms of persecution are included under the portrayal of shed blood,” *ibid.* One is unconvinced that all forms of persecution are in view in the very stark use of blood. Revelation has many examples of saints, witnesses, etc. who lose their lives because of their testimony, e.g. Antipas, and the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3-4. While Revelation does likely reference other forms of persecution, the reference to blood here does not necessitate these references. In a later reference Beale, quoting Josephus, argues, “Drinking blood” was an idiom for oppression in the ancient world,” *ibid.*, 861. However, the quote of Josephus, from Wars 5.343-344, refers to the blood of the city, and is a clear metaphor, since cities do not have blood, Josephus, “Wars of the Jews,” 714. In this case, drunk is a metaphor, but there is little indication that the blood of the saints is a metaphor. Boxall agrees, writing, “The reference is plainly to those who have died for their testimony; the genitive of Jesus in this case is an object genitive: they are witnesses to Jesus through the shedding of their blood,” Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 243.

³⁵⁰ Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 239.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Whatever the metaphor of, “the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands,” may mean, one believes the metaphor intends to convey something within the legal context of Revelation. Judgment, witnesses, thrones, court, books, etc. are all a part of a courtroom image in Revelation in which the “two witnesses” metaphor plays a part.

Before exploring the associated common places of olive trees and lampstands with witness, and seeking co-textual meaning, one adds briefly to this witness idea, as associated with olive trees and lampstands in Rev. 11:3-4, that the use of natural phenomenon as witnesses, such as heaven and earth, is not unheard of in biblical literature, particularly in the legal covenant context of Deuteronomy. Although the LXX does not use the traditional *μάρτυς* that one outlines above, several passages use a verbal form of the word to express the same idea.

For instance, Deut. 4:26 uses *διαμαρτύρομαι*, to testify or bear witness to,³⁵² in the context of God’s covenant with Israel. There, God declares that when Israel’s children enter the land of promise and become complacent and make idols this will provoke him to anger. Therefore, God says, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to occupy ... (NRSV).”³⁵³ The requisite portion of the LXX, regarding heaven and earth as witnesses, reads, *διαμαρτύρομαι ὑμῖν σήμερον τόν τε οὐρανόν καὶ τήν γῆν*.³⁵⁴

The exact same phrase occurs again in Deut. 30:19, when God declares, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and

³⁵² Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 233.

³⁵³ The New English Translation of the Septuagint is similar here, except it reads, “I call sky and earth to witness against you today...,” Melvin K.H. Peter, “Deuteronomion,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 150.

³⁵⁴ Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*.

curses (NRSV).”³⁵⁵ The LXX reads the same in Deut. 30:19 as in Deut. 4:26. The phrase occurs again with slight variation in Deut. 31:28, where the NRSV reads, “Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officials, so that I may recite these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them.”³⁵⁶

The phrase in question in Deut. 31:28 LXX has διαμαρτύρωμαι αὐτοῖς τόν τε οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. The lengthening of the omicron in ομαι of διαμαρτύρομαι to the omega in ωμαι of διαμαρτύρωμαι, signifies a shift from the indicative to the subjunctive,³⁵⁷ and Deut. 31:28 uses αὐτοῖς, them, for the direct object, rather than the ὑμῖν, of the two previous uses in Deut. These changes are small and do not alter the basic idea that God is calling heaven and earth as covenant witnesses against the people of Israel, perhaps as a way of saying that all nature or all creation testifies against them.³⁵⁸ De Roche outlines the traditional view that the invocation of such types of witnesses are indicative of witnesses not judges,³⁵⁹ a view one holds here.

³⁵⁵ Again, the only difference between the NRSV and the New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS) is the use of sky for heaven in the NETS.

³⁵⁶ One noted previously that an example of non-human witness occurs in Genesis, where a pile of stones serves as witness between Laban and Jacob. One will note later the specific use of an instance of trees as a non-human witness. There are many other instances of non-human witness, including non-divine instances, in Greek literature. One such case is Pausanias, who is writing about Echembrotus’ use of flute music as an offering for victory in games. Pausanias records that Echembrotus set up a bronze tripod on which there is an inscription recording the use of flute music. Pausanias says of this tripod, “My witness here is the offering set up by Echembrotus...,” μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι καὶ τοῦ Ἐχεμβροτου τὸ ἀνάθημα, τρίπους χαλκοῦς...” Edmonds, ed. *Lyra Graeca: Being the Remains of all the Greek Lyric Poets From Eumelus To Timotheus Excepting Pindar*, 2-3.

³⁵⁷ The subjunctive here is a result of its pairing with another subjunctive earlier in the sentence, λαλήσω, “I might speak.” The author uses ἵνα λαλήσω, in order that I might speak, as a purpose clause stating why God assembled the elders. The use of the subjunctive form of “I witness,” is also part of this purpose statement. God called the elders to witness against the people. For the use of ἵνα and subjunctive as purpose see, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 471.

³⁵⁸ Although much later than John, Fögen records the 4th-century AD grammarian Charisius as indicating the calling of heaven as witness was a common oath taking formula reserved only for men, Thorsten Fögen, “Female Speech,” in *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 323.

³⁵⁹ Michael De Roche, “Yahweh’s Rîb Against Israel: A Reassessment of the so-called ‘Prophetic Lawsuit’ in the Preexilic Prophets,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102, no. 4 (1983): 563. One notes, however, that De Roche does not agree with the traditional assessment of prophetic lawsuits and the use of natural phenomenon as witnesses. He believes the term lawsuit to be an anachronism.

A summary of witness in Revelation also indicates that witnesses in the Apocalypse is a legal term, implying a courtroom or similar legal scenario.³⁶⁰ It also reveals that witnesses in Revelation tend to die. Both Jesus and Antipas pay for their witness with their lives. The two witnesses in Revelation 11 also die at the hands of the beast from the abyss.³⁶¹ Rev. 17:6 indicates the whore is drunk on the blood of the witnesses.

It is a grim reality that the witnesses pay with their lives, yet one must not make the mistake of many moderns in believing that *μάρτυς* is equal to martyrdom. As Trites demonstrates, the word *μάρτυς* in the time of John and even in the Apocalypse still refers to the juridical concept of a courtroom witness. It is only later, perhaps due to Revelation that the word takes on the connotation of death.³⁶²

3.5 *Overview of Witness in Extra-Biblical Literature*

Although the OT and NT provide substantial background for the associated common places of witness as they may relate to lampstands and olive trees in Rev. 11:3-4, it is also important to search extra-biblical literature for hints of these associated common places as well. This literature may reflect similar contexts from which John may find precedence for his associated common places, or which reflect such associations in the culture from which John may draw upon.

³⁶⁰ One prefers the divine courtroom scenario, as indicated in the discussion of Rev. 20. Trites believes that the idea of witness in Revelation indicates that some Christians "... will be hauled into lawcourts and sentenced to martyrs' deaths," Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, 156. He asserts this also due to passages like Matt. 10:18, which reads, "... you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles." While this is certainly possible, one would need to make a stronger case that the testimony of the witnesses in Revelation has a specific connection to the Roman courts.

³⁶¹ 4Q216 or 4QJubilees, indicates that God sent witnesses to testify against reprobate Israel, but Israel refused to listen and killed the witnesses, Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 461.

³⁶² Allison A. Trites, "Μάρτυς and Martyrdom in the Apocalypse: A Semantic Study," *Novum Testamentum* 15, no. 1 (January 1973).

While there are likely several resources to which one can turn to explore witness in extra-biblical literature, this section does not offer an exhaustive overview, but rather highlights those texts that may give insight into the later interpretative traditions of witness that could have some bearing on witness in John's time. There is also some overlap in this category, and the category regarding numbered witnesses below.

In the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, many references to witness come from biblical texts, transposed into new texts. *The Assumption of Moses*, for instance, recounts the calling of heaven and earth as witnesses against Israel in their covenant with God.³⁶³ The same idea is in 2 Baruch 19:1 and 2 Baruch 84:2.³⁶⁴ Translators suppose the calling of heaven and earth as witnesses in the fragments of column 1 of 1Q22 or 1Qwords of Moses.³⁶⁵ Heaven and earth are witnesses in 4 Ezra 2:14.³⁶⁶

1 Enoch 95:6 is a woe oracle where the witnesses of falsehood will soon perish and in 1 Enoch 96:4, still in the midst of a series of woes, the money of sinners "shall be a witness against you, as a record of your evil deeds."³⁶⁷ 1 Enoch 100:11 is an example of non-human witnesses, in this case natural phenomena, as it states, "Every cloud, mist, dew, and rain shall witness against you..."³⁶⁸ Similarly, 1 Enoch 104:8 has, "... light and darkness as well as day and night witness all your sins."³⁶⁹

3 Enoch 4:3 recounts the story of God, the Holy One, taking Enoch from the earth in the generation of the flood, to serve as a "...witness against them in the heavenly height ... so that

³⁶³ *The Assumption of Moses* 3:12, Charles, ed. *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2:417.

³⁶⁴ Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:627, 650. See also Charles, ed. *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2:492, 524.

³⁶⁵ Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 59.

³⁶⁶ Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:527.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:77.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:82.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:85.

they should not say, ‘The Merciful One is cruel!’”³⁷⁰ 3 Enoch 48C.2 has Enoch as “... my witness, together with the four creatures of the chariot...”³⁷¹

The Testament of Abraham 13:6-8, writing of the judgment at the end of the world, records that three tribunals will judge the world, the son of God is the first judge, the twelve tribes of Israel are the second judge, and God is the third judge. There must be three tribunals because, “... a matter is not ultimately established by one or two witnesses, but every matter shall be established by three witnesses.”³⁷²

Although there is no number for the word witness, 1QS, or Community Rule, notes “no-one should raise a matter against his fellow in front of the Many unless it is with reproof in the presence of witnesses.”³⁷³ 4Q212 records that the chosen people will be witnesses “to justice from the plant of everlasting justice...”³⁷⁴

Naḥal Ḥever (8HevXIIgr) contains a fragmentary reference to Micah 1:2, where God is a witness against the peoples, the earth, and all that is in the earth.³⁷⁵ 1Q14 supposedly contains a reference to the same, but the word witness is missing and translators assume its reconstruction.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 1:258. Milik includes a discussion of Enoch’s role in Józef T. Milik, ed. *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 11.

³⁷¹ Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:311.

³⁷² Ibid., 1:890.

³⁷³ Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 83.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 445.

³⁷⁵ *Naḥal Ḥever Greek Minor Prophets, Reconstruction*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2010), GM Col. iv:32.

³⁷⁶ Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 9.

3.6 *The Number Two and Witnesses*

One does not believe that the number two in the metaphor of witnesses are olive trees and lampstands is symbolic.³⁷⁷ This is unlike the number seven as it appears in a metaphor in chapter one of Revelation.

One bases this conclusion on scant evidence of the number two as a symbolic number, in contrast with seven, in ancient Judaic literature, or other ANE literature, upon which John draws for his metaphoric traditions.³⁷⁸ It seems best to conclude that the number two for Rev. 11:3-4 strictly relates to the requirement in the OT that two witnesses are present in certain court cases.³⁷⁹

One is also aware that the requirement of two witnesses, where the word two specifically modifies the word witnesses, appears as something unique to the OT.³⁸⁰ There are instances where two witnesses appear in a legal context, such as a contract, but the number itself does not appear, only the names of the witnesses. That said, one briefly examines here the use of numbered witnesses, or multiple witnesses, in some legal contexts of the ANE.

³⁷⁷ So too Bauckham, who writes, “Two has a rather limited significance...,” Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, 30. He writes this in the context of stating seven, four, three, and twelve are more significant.

³⁷⁸ One is aware of some later mystical traditions regarding the number two, but they are not relevant for this dissertation. E.g. two represents the void and chaos from which God created, Phineas Mordell, *The Origin of Letters and Numerals according to the Sefer Yetzirah*. (Philadelphia: Phineas Mordell, 1914), 60.

³⁷⁹ This is not to say the number is unimportant, it is just not important for this study in the same way as the number seven. As Ryken, et al. demonstrate, the number two appears more than any other number in the Bible and has rhetorical significance in many contexts, Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman III, Duriez, Penney, and Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 901.

³⁸⁰ Vliet has similar conclusions, stating, “We have seen that the important place which the rule excluding the single witness and asking for two or three witnesses to sustain a charge or to confirm a word or case has in the New Testament, cannot be explained by reference to Roman or Greek or Hellenistic law. Nowhere do we find such a rule the vogue but in the writings of Palestinian Judaism ...” H. Van Vliet, *No Single Witness: A Study on the Adoption of the Law of Deut. 19:15 Par. into the New Testament*. ed. H.W. Obbink, A.A. van Ruler, and W.C. van Unnik, *Studia Theologica Rheno-Traiectina* (Utrecht, Holland: Kemink & Zoon, 1958), 63.

One of the very few instances where the number two and the word witness explicitly appear in the same context is the Turin Indictment Papyrus, ca 1150 B.C.E., a document containing charges of crimes against the priest Penanuqet, associated with the Temple of Khnum in Elephantine.³⁸¹ There are seventeen official charges against him, with the seventh reading, “Charge concerning the handing over to the temple of a chest with two witness-documents in it by the prophet Bakenkhonsu. He opened it and took out one witness-document of it. He laid it before Khnum, and he assented to it.”³⁸²

The translator of the text notes that there is dispute surrounding the translation of “witness-document,” and one could translate the text, *mtrw*, as simply “witness.” Regardless of translation, given the context of the charge, objects, rather than persons, are most probably the witnesses. The text says nothing of the background of the reason for the two witnesses, nor why the actions are crimes. Because of this, one notes the existence here of the rare combination of the words “two” and “witness” together, but cannot draw conclusions.

There is another document from Elephantine that has only two witnesses, although the words “two,” and “witness,” do not appear. It is an account of an inheritance from 281 B.C.E, with two witness names, Drimakas and Taerpychybs.³⁸³ Once again, the lack of literary connection and indications of any significance to the two witnesses makes it impossible for one to draw conclusions.

Similarly, an earlier Sumerian document has two witnesses, although the words “two,” and “witness,” do not appear. The case involves the purchase of 12 date-palm trees under

³⁸¹ Although there are others charged in the document, the seventeen charges against Penanuqet open the document.

³⁸² Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*. ed. P.M.M.G. Akkermans et al., Studies in Near Eastern Archaeology and Civilisation (Leiden; New York; Köln: E.J. Brill, 1996), 47.

³⁸³ Ibid., 417-418.

dispute. The accuser rejects the testimony of the witnesses for the one who bought the trees, forcing the buyer to take an oath validating the purchase. The “court” upheld the purchase of the trees because of the witnesses and the oath of the buyer.³⁸⁴

While the number two with the word witness does not appear often, the concept of multiple attestation is consistent with other legal requirements in the ANE, although it certainly appears that not all cases required multiple witnesses.³⁸⁵ At a general level, the appearance of a list of witnesses in legal documents is common in antiquity. Hundreds of Babylonian legal texts, dealing mostly with financial matters and property, dating from 747 to 626 B.C., possess lists of witnesses, including their genealogies, attesting to their legality.³⁸⁶ The naming of witnesses at the end of Babylonian texts extends beyond financial matters as one finds evidence of this practice in betrothal texts as well.³⁸⁷

Assyrian texts also include the naming of multiple witnesses in legal documents, and may also indicate that the higher on the list a person’s name appears, the more important their role in society, such as vizier.³⁸⁸ A specific early example of numbered witnesses, apparently, is the case of a man in the Middle Assyrian period who wishes to take his concubine as his wife. As part of the process of “veiling her,” the man must do so in the presence of five or six witnesses.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁴ Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 335.

³⁸⁵ Alexander catalogs 391 criminal and civil trials of the late Roman republic. Many of these trials list multiple witnesses who participated, although several trials only have one witness, Michael C. Alexander, *Trials in the Late Roman Republic: 149 B.C. to 50 B.C.* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

³⁸⁶ John A. Brinkman, “Babylonia in the Shadow of Assyria (747-626 B.C.),” in *The Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and Other States of the Near East, From the Eighth to the Sixth Centuries B.C.*, ed. John Boardman et al., The Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; Madrid; Cape Town: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 64-65. Roth includes numerous examples of laws requiring witnesses in the laws of Hammurabi, mostly involving property, but the laws only require witnesses, the number required is unknown, Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, 83-84.

³⁸⁷ Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East*. trans., Helen and Mervyn Richardson (Boston; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 2016), 72.

³⁸⁸ Grayson, “Assyrian Civilization,” 201.

³⁸⁹ Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East*, 25. Stol also indicates that the dissolution of a marriage in Middle Assyria required, among others, five witnesses, *ibid.*, 202. Although referring to post-classical Rome, Ellart records the use of five or seven witnesses in Roman wills. In the case of seven witnesses, he writes, “The *mancipatio*, as it is widely

In another Assyrian marriage contract, from around 650 B.C., a governess of a palace gives her daughter to a man in marriage. The contract stipulates a dowry and penalties that each party must pay should they desire a divorce. The contract also indicates that if the daughter is unable to produce a son, she shall give her slave-girl to her husband to produce sons.³⁹⁰ The contract has the names of seven witnesses listed at the end.³⁹¹ An Aramaic document from Elephantine, dating to ca 400 B.C.E, includes an adoption contract with seven witnesses as well.³⁹²

Similarly, two Aramaic inscriptions, one a monument from Sefire, the other a cylinder seal, dating to the mid-eighth century B.C.E., record multiple attestation in Assyria. It is not that there is a command for multiple witnesses, rather a reflection of the practice. In a treaty between Bar-ga'yah and Mati'el, a stele records fifteen deities, heaven and earth, the abyss and springs, and day and night, all as witnesses to the treaty.³⁹³ The second inscription, a seal of Ir-Addu, concerns fugitives,³⁹⁴ specifically slaves, and records a scenario in which a mayor and five of his witnesses must swear an oath clearing the town of guilt for harboring the fugitive.³⁹⁵

known, required formally seven witnesses, or to be more precise, five witnesses in addition to a *familiae emptor* [intermediary/trustee] and a *libripens* [one holding scales]." Carlos Sánchez-Moreno Ellart, "The Late Roman Law of Inheritance: The Testament of Five or Seven Witnesses," in *Inheritance, Law and Religions in the Ancient and Mediaeval Worlds*, ed. Béatrice Caseau and Sabine R. Huebner, Centre de recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance Monographies (Paris: Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilisation by Byzance de Boccard, 2014), 236. Although not important for this study, one did find that ancient Hindus apparently required three witnesses for most legal transactions, Vijai Govind, "The Role of Witnesses in the Ancient and the Modern Indian Judicial System," *Journal of the Indian Law Institute* 15, no. 4 (1973): 648.

³⁹⁰ An interesting story comparable to the saga of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar.

³⁹¹ Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East*, 203.

³⁹² Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*, 85.

³⁹³ Klaas A.D. Smelik, "West Semitic Monumental Inscriptions," in *The Context of Scripture: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 213. Crouch includes a helpful discussion of these deities and inscriptions in Carly L. Crouch, *Israel and the Assyrians: Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and the Nature of Subversion*. ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Roxana Flammini, Ancient Near East Monographs (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 98-99.

³⁹⁴ Kienast writes that fugitives were apparently a common problem in the Middle Babylonian period of the second millennium B.C.E., Burkhard Kienast, "Akkadian Monumental Inscriptions," in *The Context of Scripture: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 329.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 330.

One especially famous example of multiple witnesses in legal situations are the “six-witness documents,” among the Greeks of Egypt. Greeks could write their own private documents, copied on two separate parchments, and have six witnesses sign and seal them. Apparently, they would seal one text, to preserve it from alteration, while leaving the remaining document visible for reading.³⁹⁶ Rowlandson notes that Hellenistic Egypt formalized the process of notaries near the end of the third century B.C. and this led to parties seeking the security of a notary as an added benefit to the witnesses of these contracts.³⁹⁷

In another legal context involving six witnesses among the Jews in Egypt, a loan document from 174 B.C.E. has a Judas son of Josephus loaning two talents and 500 drachmas of copper money to Agathocles son of Ptolemaeus. The text indicates both were Jews and the interest amount is twenty-four percent.³⁹⁸ The loan closes with six witnesses, divided into that these two witnesses were 80-arourae holders.³⁹⁹

In a similar Egyptian legal context of the second or first century B.C.E., again involving Jews, two Jews are witnesses to a contract regarding the sharing of pottery. The contract also indicates that the parties involved in the contract are illiterate and apparently used an amanuensis, whose name was Chaeremon.⁴⁰⁰

Remaining with the theme of Jewish witness, although this time in Greece, an inscription in the temple of Amphiaraus, in Orupus, Greece, indicates five witnesses sign their names to a

³⁹⁶ Pieter W. Pestman, *The New Papyrological Primer*. Fifth ed. (Leiden; New York; København; Köln: E.J. Brill, 1990), 42. So too, Mark Depauw, Thomas Kruse, J.G. Manning, Tomasz Markiewicz, Sebastian Richter, Katelijn Vandorpe, and Uri Yiftach-Firanko, "The Historical Development of the Form, Content, and Administration of Legal Documents," in *Law and Legal Practice From Alexander to the Arab Conquest: A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation, with Introductions and Commentary*, ed. James G. Keenan, J.G. Manning, and Uri Yiftach-Firanko (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 43-46.

³⁹⁷ Jane Rowlandson, "Administration and Law: Graeco-Roman," in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, ed. Allan B. Lloyd (Malden, MA; Oxford: Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 244.

³⁹⁸ This contract is an apparent violation of the Mosaic covenant, as God prohibits the Israelites from charging one another interest in loans in Exod. 22:25, Lev. 25:36-37, and Deut. 23:19.

³⁹⁹ Feldman and Reinhold, eds., *Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans*, 31.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

declaration of freedom concerning a Jewish slave.⁴⁰¹ Similarly, an inscription in Delphi contains five witnesses to the manumission of three female Jewish slaves.⁴⁰²

Although the witnesses are unnumbered, Cole notes that during Greek weddings, the bridal procession would carry the bride openly from her parents' home to her husband's home, so that all the neighbors could serve as witnesses that the wedding took place.⁴⁰³ In this way, there is multiple attestation, but there is no specific number.

One Greek source that does list a specific number of witnesses, three to be exact, though without noting why, is an older Greek story where the god Hermes goes to the house of Hipponax with three witnesses.⁴⁰⁴ It is apparently during a quarrel, requiring a "legal manoeuvre," but the text is fragmentary.⁴⁰⁵

Trites, in writing of Isaeus, claims that a litigant summons his opponents with at least two witnesses, but overstates the evidence of the cited source. The text indicates the use of witnesses, and uses a form of the word two, but records that written depositions be "made in the presence not of one or two only, but of as many witnesses as possible."⁴⁰⁶ The Greek is *καὶ οὐ μεθ' ἐνὸς μετὰ δυοῖν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἂν μετὰ πλείστων δυνώμεθα τὰς ἐκμαρτυρίας πάντες ποιοῦμεθα*.⁴⁰⁷ One translates this sentence, "... and not with one or with two, but with the largest (number) who are

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 62-63.

⁴⁰² Also of interest in the list of witnesses to this transaction is that the priest of Apollo Amyntas serves as a witness, *ibid.*, 63.

⁴⁰³ Cole, "Greek Religion," 310.

⁴⁰⁴ Easterling and Knox, eds., *Greek Literature*, 161.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ The idea of at least two witnesses here is misleading as Trites quotes Isaeus III.19, Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, 5. The reference is, presumably, to Isaeus Pyrrhus (3), line 19. As far as one can tell, the text writes of witnesses but says nothing of at least two witnesses. Isaeus 3.21 records that written depositions are "made in the presence not of one or two only but of as many witnesses as possible," but the number one is as prominent as the number two, Isaeus, *Isaeus with an English Translation*. ed. G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), 89. A better summary of the reference is to conclude as the text itself concludes, as many as possible.

⁴⁰⁷ Isaeus, *Isaeus with an English Translation*, 88.

all able to give (make) testimony.” ἑκμαρτυρίας is a word for testimony,⁴⁰⁸ not of witness, though obviously related, and δυοῖν is a form of the word “two.”

Vliet argues that the “cult-association of Iobakchoi,” knew the law of two witnesses, since if a member of the group wished to complain about another, he must bring “two ἑνόρκοι,” or two co-members “who would swear that they had heard it, when he was injured or abused.”⁴⁰⁹

There are several objections to this specific reference. It is potentially 100 years after The Apocalypse, reflecting a tradition, but bearing no influence on John. It does not use the Greek word for witness, only indicating the taking of an oath by co-members. Moreover, the laws of a cult-association do not reflect Greco-Roman culture at large. While helpful in tracing traditions, this instance is not helpful in understanding potential influence on John’s metaphor.

Greeks, regardless of the number, did not trust witnesses in the same way that the Hebrews did.⁴¹⁰ If Easterling is correct, even though witnesses played an important role in the Greek legal system, “Greeks tended to distrust the testimony of witnesses or documents, primarily because these could often be secured by force or bribery.”⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ Henry G. Liddell, s.v. “ἑκμαρτυρίας”, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996).

⁴⁰⁹ Vliet, *No Single Witness: A Study on the Adoption of the Law of Deut. 19:15 Par. into the New Testament*, 19.

⁴¹⁰ From a Hebrew perspective, one example of this may be in tractate Gittin, in the Mishnah. Writing about writs of divorce, Neusner indicates that “witnesses are the key-element in the process; the document is validated by valid witnesses, and lacking witnesses, even though it is correctly written and delivered, it has no effect at all,” Neusner, *The Mishnah: Religious Perspectives*, 98. This trusting reliance upon witnesses also reflects Boecker’s assertion that “the verbal testimony of witnesses took pride of place,” in early neo-Sumerian and Babylonian courts, Hans Jochen Boecker, *Law and the Administration of Justice in the Old Testament and Ancient East*. trans., Jeremy Moiser (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 23. In the same place, Boecker indicates that one witness was sufficient in many cases. He further mentions a case in which transactional witnesses to the purchase of a slave were dead. In this case of dead witnesses, the swearing of an oath by the purchaser was enough to allow him to keep the slave, *ibid.*, 23-24.

⁴¹¹ Easterling and Knox, eds., *Greek Literature*, 499. cf. Pomeroy et al. who write that “Greeks remained somewhat suspicious of texts, and jurors usually trusted the testimony given by witnesses under oath more than written evidence ...” Pomeroy, Donlan, Burstein, and Roberts, *A Brief History of Ancient Greece: Politics, Society, and Culture*, 237.

Although one does not explore specifically Roman/Latin literature here, given the distance of language that exists regarding the interpretation of metaphor, it is, as with other sections, worth noting potential traditions that may exist.

That said, Vliet demonstrates that, although there are no specific requirements for two witnesses a single witness cannot testify in court cases.⁴¹² However, his example comes from a decree of Emperor Constantine from A.D. 334.⁴¹³

A few examples from the Dead Sea scrolls indicate numbers associated with witnesses as well, although the legal nature of some references is ambiguous. In 1QS, or The Community Rule refers to, עֲדֵי אֱמֶת, "...true witnesses for justice."⁴¹⁴ One could also translate this as "faithful witnesses."⁴¹⁵ Earlier, the text reveals these witnesses are, "...twelve laymen and three priests who are blameless in the light of all that has been revealed from the whole Law..."

The late Cairo Damascus Document (CD), though far removed from John, reflects traditions established by the Qumran community prior to John.⁴¹⁶ Murphy points out, "...unworthy members of the community cannot be witnesses against other sectarians."⁴¹⁷ This is one way to deal with the prohibition against false witnesses. Similarly, CD-A, column 9.3, records that members of the covenant community cannot bring an accusation against his fellow

⁴¹² The exception being for bishops, whose testimony, "... shall be unhesitatingly accepted by every judge," Vliet, *No Single Witness: A Study on the Adoption of the Law of Deut. 19:15 Par. into the New Testament*, 11.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, eds., *Texts Concerned With Religious Law*, The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), 32-33.

⁴¹⁵ The reference is to the "Community council," which "shall be founded on truth," and is the "foundation of the holy of holies for Aaron, true witnesses for the judgment and chosen by the will (of God) to atone for the land and to render the wicked their retribution," Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 89. An almost identical statement is in *ibid.*, 531.

⁴¹⁶ Murphy-O'Connor confirms that the CD Damascus Document is from an earlier period because fragments of similar text came from Qumran, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, s.v. "Damascus Document (CD and QD)." ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 246.

⁴¹⁷ Frederick J. Murphy, *Early Judaism from the Exile to the Time of Jesus*. (Peabody, MA: Henrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002), 187.

unless it is before witnesses.⁴¹⁸ In the same document, CD-A, 9:22-23, the community may exclude a man from the pure food based on two “trustworthy witnesses.”⁴¹⁹ A comparable text is 4Q270, where “... they shall accept two trustworthy witnesses,” for exclusion from pure food.⁴²⁰

4Q524, or 4QTemple Scroll, indicates that a man who commits treason by passing information to a foreign nation should hang on a tree on the testimony of two or three witnesses.⁴²¹ A parallel Temple Scroll text in 11Q19 indicates the same concerning treason,⁴²² and an earlier column in the same document, not related to treason, states that a single witness does not suffice in an accusation against a man, but every matter requires the testimony of two or three witnesses.⁴²³

Summarizing the material of the Dead Sea Scrolls one presents, most of the examples given here carry on the two or three witnesses of the OT and have some legal connotation. There is consistency from the OT, NT, and Dead Sea Scrolls in that when the words “two” and “witnesses” appear in the very near co-text, it is a legal matter.

Josephus follows this tradition as well, referencing a situation in which two or three witnesses appear, likely drawing upon Deut. 19:15, although he does not indicate such. In the reference, he states, “I think three witnesses too few to be brought by a man that hath done as he

⁴¹⁸ Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. 2 vols., vol. 1 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1999), 565.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 567. Bernstein and Koyfman argue that the discussion of witnesses here in CD 9:16-23 is an example of *perush*, Moshe J. Bernstein and Shlomo A. Koyfman, “The Interpretation of Biblical Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Forms and Methods,” in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran*, ed. Matthias Henze, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 75-78. They borrow the word and definition of Schiffman, defining it as, “an exegesis based only on the analysis of the text in question, without recourse to other passages from scripture,” *ibid.*, 75. Again, following Schiffman, they distinguish *perush* from *midrash*, since *midrash* is “an exegesis in which a corroborative passage in Scripture plays a part,” and “an exegetical form in which a passage is interpreted in light of a second passage,” *ibid.*

⁴²⁰ Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 613.

⁴²¹ Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1051.

⁴²² Ibid., 1287.

⁴²³ Ibid., 1283, col. lxi:6-7.

ought to do ...”⁴²⁴ He continues this idea of two or three witnesses later, writing about polity and civil judiciaries, “But let not a single witness be credited; but three, or two at the least, and those such whose testimony is confirmed by their good lives.”⁴²⁵

Although he does not use an explicit number, Josephus’ preference for three witnesses is implicit when he writes later, “As for me, I call your sanctuary and God’s holy angels and our common country to witness ...”⁴²⁶ While the legality of this latter reference is ambiguous, perhaps given its oath nature, the former references continue the OT legal tradition.

Philo, whose works in no way demonstrate a reliable account of the entirety of an interpretative tradition, gives possible insight into witnesses,⁴²⁷ particularly numbered witnesses, when he writes, “But a thing which is sacred is proved to be so by three witnesses, the middle number, education, and the perfect number.”⁴²⁸ A middle number needs no explanation. Apparently, any number that ends up in the middle of a count, serves as the first witness.

However, Philo defines education as the rod of numbering, using the account of Jacob allegorically. As something, such as sheep, pass under a rod, one numbers them, or counts them off, and the tenth is sacred. This rod is the second witness. Philo writes, “ἡ δὲ ῥαβδος παιδείας σύμβολον,” translated, “but the rod is a symbol of education.”⁴²⁹ The third witness is the number ten, which, according to Philo, “... is a confirmation of that perfection which takes place in accordance with improvement ...”⁴³⁰ There seems to be some agreement between Philo and Josephus on a growing preference for three witnesses rather than two.

⁴²⁴ Josephus, “The Antiquities of the Jews,” 16.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 117. In the same place, Josephus indicates he does not believe women or slaves should serve as witnesses.

⁴²⁶ Thackeray, *Josephus with an English Translation*, 481.

⁴²⁷ He has much to say about false witnesses as well, Philo, “The Decalogue,” 526, 530, 533.

⁴²⁸ Philo, “On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile,” 191.

⁴²⁹ Philo, “Posterity §97.”

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

In a discussion of unnumbered witnesses, which one includes here due to the extremity of the scenario, Philo advises those who have “admiration for virtue,” to inflict punishment on any Gentiles who do not attend to the honor due to God alone. They are to inflict his punishment “without any delay, not bringing them before either any judgment seat, or any council, or any bench of magistrates...” They are to see themselves as “counsellors, and judges, and accusers, and witnesses, and laws, and the people ...”⁴³¹

Philo encourages this sort of vigilante justice based on Phinehas’ zeal in Numbers 25:11, when he drove a spear through an Israelite man and a Midianite woman fornicating in the presence of Moses and the entire community. Phinehas’ zeal stopped the plague of the Lord against Israel and since he appears to have acted without recourse to law or courts, Philo seems to encourage such behavior. The irony however, is that the text of Num. 25:11 is clear that the entire community witnessed such behavior. The text does not mention two or three witnesses because there were so many witnesses that the case is unequivocal. The tradition of zeal that follows from this is one of tendentious interpretation.⁴³²

The hypocrisy of Philo’s claim is that he condemns as tyranny the same idea when Flaccus Avillius, viceroy of Alexandria by the will of Tiberius Caesar, acts as everything, “accuser, enemy, witness, judge, and executioner...” in ordering the extermination of some Jews as prisoners of war.⁴³³

⁴³¹ Philo, "The Special Laws, I," 539.

⁴³² Wright believes that Paul intentionally used the language of zeal regarding himself in Gal. 1:14, thereby connecting himself to Phinehas, Nicholas T. Wright, "Paul, Arabia, and Elijah (Galatians 1:17)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 684-685. Wright follows Hengel, believing Phinehas was a model for the Maccabees, Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1961), 149-177.

⁴³³ Philo, "Flaccus," §54.

A search of the Jerusalem Talmud reveals too many references to witnesses to deal with them appropriately here.⁴³⁴ Even a specific search regarding the two or three witness concept presents more results than one can adequately address.⁴³⁵ However, given the large number of references to two witnesses in the Talmud, it references one's assertion previously that the number two is not symbolic with respect to witnesses, but reflects the Israelite legal tradition of requiring two witnesses in many juridical matters. One therefore will include a summary of some of these passages as evidence of this tradition.

In a debate over the time of the prohibition of leaven at the start of the Sabbath, be it from the fifth hour or the seventh hour, R. Judah argues from the rule of two witnesses that one witness cannot say the fifth hour and the other witness say the seventh hour, or else "their testimony is cancelled."⁴³⁶

Tractate Rosh Hashanah indicates that a system of messengers announces the new moon on six occasions through the year.⁴³⁷ There is debate in the tractate as to whose messengers are valid and how to proceed in accepting the signatures of two witnesses to the new moon, where the record keepers know one witness, but not the other. R Zeira states, "We need not inquire about a case in which there were two [witnesses]."⁴³⁸

In Tractate Yebamot, which attempts to articulate the proper enforcement of levirate marriage, significant debate occurs over a woman whose husband and son went overseas. Two witnesses tell her husband and son have died and she remarries. Later, two other witnesses say

⁴³⁴ Neusner's translation contains nearly 2,600 references to witnesses, Neusner, *The Jerusalem Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*. Daube deals with a portion of these references in David Daube, "Witnesses in Bible and Talmud," in *Talmudic Law: Collected Works of David Daube*, Studies in Comparative Legal History (Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley, 1992).

⁴³⁵ There are 287 references to two witnesses in Neusner's Jerusalem Talmud, Neusner, *The Jerusalem Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., y. Pesah. 1:4, I.2.C.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., Rosh Hashanah: Introduction.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., y. Ros. Has. 2:1, I.2.G. Similar debates continue in y. Ros. Has. 2:5, II.1; y. Ros. Has. 2:6;

the husband and son have not died. The rabbis debate as to whether the woman should divorce the second husband or remain and the Babylonian and Palestinian rabbis have different judgments.⁴³⁹

Tractate Ketubot notes that a seal requires “the validation of two witnesses...” and “each sign of puberty requires the validation of two witnesses.”⁴⁴⁰ The same tractate indicates that in matters of “... genealogy and Holy Things deriving from the altar,” regarding the status of a priest, “... there must be two witnesses.”⁴⁴¹

Tractate Nazir has two witnesses contradicting a man regarding sexual relations with a betrothed slave girl. The witnesses testify the man had contact with the woman, while he denies it. Since there are two witnesses, one is not to believe the man.⁴⁴²

Tractate Sotah includes discussion on Numbers 5:14, where a man becomes jealous of his wife and makes her drink the bitter water as a test. R. Eliezer says the man should express his jealousy in front of two witnesses, but the woman can drink the water in the present of a single witness, while R. Joshua says both the accusation and the drinking must take place in the presence of two witnesses.⁴⁴³

These examples represent a fraction of the 287 references to two witnesses in the Jerusalem Talmud, and every reference surrounds the issue of legal validity based on the testimony of at least two witnesses. It seems quite reasonable to conclude, based on the examination of witnesses in the OT, NT, and other literature related to the Bible, that when two witnesses appear in the literature, it is in the context of a legal matter.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., y. Yebam. 10:3, I.1.A,B,C, and O. See also y. Yebam. 15:3, 15:4.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., y. Ketub. 2:4, I.4.Y.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., y. Ketub. 2:7, I.1.A.

⁴⁴² Ibid., y. Naz. 8:1, I.1.R. In fact, the entirety of the co-text of this reference is a debate regarding situations concerning two witnesses.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., y. Sotah 1:1.

Therefore, one does conclude that the appearance of two witnesses in Revelation 11:3-4 indicates that John is writing, even in figurative terms, of a legal matter. The issue that remains is for one to examine olive trees in the same way one previously examined lampstands, to determine potential associated common places. These associated common places may reveal the meaning of what one now believes is a legal metaphor.

3.7 Overview of Olive Trees/Olives/Olive Oil

Since the metaphor in Revelation 11:3-4 states that the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands, it is also necessary to examine an overview of olive trees in the cultural and geographical milieu of scripture to determine association common places, which should lead an interpreter to the potential meaning of this culturally rooted metaphor.

Olive trees, olives, olive oil, and olive wood are a significant part of the agricultural, religious, and economic milieu in Mediterranean antiquity,⁴⁴⁴ particularly Greco-Roman

⁴⁴⁴ The focus of the study of olive trees, olives, olive oil, and olive wood focuses on the Mediterranean, especially Greco-Roman and Israelite cultures, and not on other ANE cultures, like Mesopotamian cultures. This is because while the olive is common in the Mediterranean region, it is either rare in other cultures, or searches of histories and literature produced few results. E.g. Bertman notes the olive is rare in Mesopotamia, Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Library of World History (New York: Facts of File, Inc., 2003), 287. He goes on to argue that the absence of the olive tree (and grapes) is due to the salinity of the soil and the lack of necessary rain fall, *ibid.*, 293. Oppenheim affirms these assertions as well, indicating the appearance of olives, among others, as one moves west, A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Profile of a Dead Civilization*. Revised ed. (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 44. Additionally, searches of Egyptian texts and histories produced few results. Searches of the *Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* on “olive” produced no results, perhaps indicating its unimportance in that society. Searches of other Sumerian texts and histories, as one uses above in other portions of the dissertation, also produced no results. Searches of Assyrian texts and histories revealed that while Assyria’s soil and rainfall were adequate for olive trees, Olmstead concludes about Assyria, “Even the olive may be grown, though not with complete success,” Albert T. Olmstead, *History of Assyria*. (Chicago; Toronto: The University of Chicago Press; The University of Toronto Press, 1951), 13. There were olive trees in Assyria, as a few passages indicate. E.g. The annals of Thutmose III indicate that during his second campaign, through Palestine and Syria (possibly the 24th year of his reign), that Assur paid tribute of olive wood, though the amount is lost, James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents From the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*. ed. William Rainey Harper, 5 vols., Ancient Records, vol. 2: The Eighteenth Dynasty (Chicago; London; Leipzig: The University of Chicago Press; Luzac & Co.; Otto Harrassowitz, 1906), 192. Strabo claims there were large olive trees in the “Heracleote Nome,” but adds, “it alone is planted with olive trees that are large and full-grown and bear vine fruit, and it would also produce good olive oil if the olives were carefully gathered ... the rest of Aegypt has no olive trees, except the gardens near Alexandria, which are sufficient for supplying olives, but furnish no oil,” Eric Herbert Warmington, ed. *The Geography of Strabo*, VIII vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. VIII (Cambridge,

society,⁴⁴⁵ and this is true in Israel as well. In fact, so significant is the olive tree, that Columella, the Latin agriculturalist, called it, “the queen of all trees.”⁴⁴⁶ Many moderns cite Homer, saying he called olive oil, the main economic product of the olive tree, “liquid gold,”⁴⁴⁷ and certain modern researchers label it, “one of the most emblematic trees in the world.”⁴⁴⁸

MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann LTD, 1967), 97. Strabo also records that the Ethiopians apparently had butter and tallow instead of olive oil, *ibid.*, 143. The lack of olive trees, and apparently a natural source for oil, may be what allowed Plato to offset the costs of his journey to Egypt by selling oil there, Thomas Felix Rudolf Gerhardt Braun, "The Greeks in Egypt," in *The Cambridge Ancient History: The Expansion of the Greek World, Eighth to Sixth Centuries B.C.*, ed. John Boardman and N.G.L. Hammond (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; Madrid; Cape Town: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 40. Borowski comments on the lack of olive trees in Egypt, in Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*. (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 118. Goor records that Egyptian material notes the lack of olive trees in Egypt as early as 2500 B.C. and writes that Egyptian records from 1800 B.C. indicate the importation of olives and oil from Israel during that time. He further notes that in later generations, St. Jerome (A.D. 340-420) also records that olives do not grow in Egypt, Asaph Goor, "The Place of the Olive in the Holy Land and Its History Through the Ages," *Economic Botany* 20, no. 3 (July 1966): 225, 231.

⁴⁴⁵ While one may consider other cultures near Israel in pursuit of associated commonplaces regarding the olive, not all those cultures valued the olive in the same way Mediterranean cultures did. For instance, Rodgers, quoting Herodotus, argues that Babylon made no pretense at growing olive trees, or any trees for that matter (except for Palm trees), as they focused on grain. He similarly reports that all oil in Babylonia was from Sesame, Herodotus, "*Herodotus of Halicarnassus*," (Pax Librorum, 2010). www.paxlibrorum.com/res/downloads/histories_5by8.pdf (accessed 23 January 2017), 81. Bertman agrees and corroborates the use of sesame oil, Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 287. Oppenheim affirms the use of sesame oil, and also notes that Babylonians drank beer, instead of wine, due to the lack of grapes and prevalence of barley, and further states that the date palm “occupies in Mesopotamia the position of the olive tree around the Mediterranean, Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Profile of a Dead Civilization*, 88, 313. Opposite of the Babylonian situation, is that of the Greeks and Romans, and other Mediterranean cultures, such as the island of Cyrauis. Herodotus indicates that the island Cyrauis, as the Carthaginians testify, was full of olives and vines, Herodotus, *Herodotus of Halicarnassus*, 81.

⁴⁴⁶ Hamish A. Forbes and Lin Foxhall, "The Queen of All Trees: Preliminary Notes on the Archeology of the Olive," *Expedition* 21, (Fall 1978): 38. Foxhall, in another place, translates this as “the first of all trees,” Lin Foxhall, *Olive Cultivation in Ancient Greece: Seeking the Ancient Economy*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

⁴⁴⁷ Maria Lisa Clodoveo, Salvatore Camposeo, Bernardo De Gennaro, Simone Pascuzzi, and Luigi Roselli, "In the Ancient World, Virgin Olive Oil Was Called 'Liquid Gold' by Homer and 'The Great Healer' by Hippocrates. Why Has This Mythic Image Been Forgotten?," *Food Research International* 62, (2014): 1062. Several modern sources reference Homer’s statement, but one was unable to find the reference in Homer.

⁴⁴⁸ David Kaniewski, Elise Van Campo, Tom Boiy, Jean-Frédéric Terral, Bouchaïb Khadari, and Guillaume Besnard, "Primary Domestication and Early Uses of the Emblematic Olive Tree: Palaeobotanical, Historical and Molecular Evidence from the Middle East," *Biological Reviews* 87, (2012): 886. Although the focus of this section is on the olive, Barnett demonstrates that oaks, cypresses, black poplars, and myrtles were also sacred in certain places in ancient Greece, Rod Barnett, "Sacred Groves: Sacrifice and the Order of Nature in Ancient Greek Landscapes," *Landscape Journal* 26, no. 2 (2007).

3.7.1 Olive Trees in Greco-Roman Society

Although an exhaustive overview of Greco-Roman sources is not the purpose of this section, one can see certain importance in olive trees in these cultures. Beginning with Greece, sacred trees are a common part of Greek religion, and the olive tree is no different.⁴⁴⁹ One finds the significance of the olive tree particularly in the cultic context of Greco-Roman religions and festivals.⁴⁵⁰

Among these religions and festivals, nowhere, it appears, is the olive more important in Greece than at Athens. This is because the Greeks believed that Athena created the olive tree,⁴⁵¹ and Håland argues that, "All Athena's festivals were related to the olive..."⁴⁵²

One can perhaps see this best in one of the greatest of Athens' celebrations, the Panathenaia, which Andersen translates as, "the [festival] of all Athenians."⁴⁵³ Andersen

⁴⁴⁹ Smardz provides a helpful introduction to sacred trees and the distinction between them and the cults of tree worship in Greece, Carolyn E. Smardz, "The Sacred Tree in Ancient Greek Religion" (M.A. thesis, McMaster University, September 1979). Lysias' record appears to indicate there is a difference between private and sacred trees, Lysias, "Before the Areopagus: Defense in the Matter of the Olive Stump," in *Lysias*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1930), 151.

⁴⁵⁰ Although one discusses Homer's work variously here, the olive tree, olive oil, and olives in general, appear often in his work. For instance, it is not a cultic context, but Homer describes a section where Athene goes to Athens and enters the house of Erechtheus, while Odysseus went to the palace of Alcinous and marveled at the four-acre grove outside the courtyard of the palace. The grove contained numerous fruit trees, among which were olive trees, and all of which flowered year round, Homer, *The Odyssey*. ed. E. Vieu, T.E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, 2 vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1 (London; New York: William Heinemann; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), 239-241.

⁴⁵¹ Evy Johanne Håland, "The Ritual Year of Athena: The Agricultural Cycle of the Olive, Girls' Rites of Passage, and Official Ideology," *Journal of Religious History* 36, no. 2 (June 2012): 268. Herodotus notes that the Athenians say that the olive tree and salt pool in the shrine of Erechtheus, "were set there by Poseidon and Athene as tokens of their contention for the land," Herodotus, *Herodotus with an English Translation*. ed. E.H. Warmington, trans., A.D. Godley, 4 vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann LTD, 1969), 51. An editorial note is clear that Athene created the olive tree and Poseidon the salt pool. Cole indicates that Athena offered the olive tree and Poseidon the salt pool as tokens to win a popular vote of the residents, Cole, "Greek Religion," 273.

⁴⁵² Håland, "The Ritual Year of Athena: The Agricultural Cycle of the Olive, Girls' Rites of Passage, and Official Ideology," 256. For a calendar of Athenian festivals, see Louise Bruit Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*. trans., Paul Cartledge (Oxford; New York; Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992), 103.

⁴⁵³ Greg Andersen, *The Athenian Experiment: Building an Imagined Political Community in Ancient Attica, 508-490 B.C.* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), 158.

indicates the import of the olive tree in its association with Athena as he describes the events of the celebration.

He is clear in noting that the order of events of this festival are vague due to a lack of extant, definitive witnesses, but believes the first act of the festival program was a ritual progression, for sacrifice, up to the Acropolis. There, “large numbers of victims were offered up to Athena on the Great Altar.”⁴⁵⁴ During this sacrifice, one could see an idol of Athena, carved of olive wood,⁴⁵⁵ “draped in a new peplos.”⁴⁵⁶

The cult statue of Athena reflects the close relationship between the goddess and the olive.⁴⁵⁷ Håland writes that this was the “holiest of all the images of Athena,” and that, “This highly revered statue of olive wood formed the centre of devotion on the citadel.”⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 159.

⁴⁵⁵ Olive wood makes an appearance in Homer’s *Odyssey*, when Calypso gives Odysseus an axe with a bronze head and an olive wood handle, Homer, *The Odyssey*, 187. Later, in the same work, the Cyclops possessed “a staff of green olive-wood ... as large as is the mast of a black ship of twenty oars,” *ibid.*, 325. In the same section, Odysseus cuts a length of the staff that is manageable, sharpens it, and plunges the stake into the Cyclops’ eye, *ibid.*, 331. The use of olive wood for the handles of weapons also appears in the *Iliad*, where Pisander carries a spear with an olive wood shaft, Homer, *The Iliad*. trans., Alexander Pope (London; New York; Toronto; Melbourne: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1909), 252.

⁴⁵⁶ Andersen, *The Athenian Experiment: Building an Imagined Political Community in Ancient Attica, 508-490 B.C.* Zaidman and Pantel also note that Athena’s statue was of olive-wood, Zaidman and Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*, 105. The relationship between the olive statue and the *peplos* is also significant for the olive discussion. Håland records that as Athena was also the goddess of weaving, women prepared the new garment in accord with the seasons of the olive tree, Evy Johanne Håland, “Athena’s Peplos: Weaving as a Core Female Activity in Ancient and Modern Greece,” *Cosmos* 20, (2004): 156. Pinch notes that olive wood appears in Graeco-Egyptian magic, where one spell requires an “olive-wood stool that has never been sat on,” Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*. (London: British Museum Press, 1994), 80. See also, Griffith and Thompson, eds., *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, 39-40. A much later Roman spell (A.D. 371), something which Luck describes as like a Ouija board, also uses a tripod of olive wood, Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, 50. A later spell, though not as late as the Ouija spell, to make a woman love a man requires the drowning of a scarab in the milk of a black cow and then approaching the scarab’s head with something like a hoop of olive wood, Griffith and Thompson, eds., *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, 137.

⁴⁵⁷ Håland states that the Athenians believed this olive-wood statute fell directly from heaven, Håland, “The Ritual Year of Athena: The Agricultural Cycle of the Olive, Girls’ Rites of Passage, and Official Ideology,” 259.

⁴⁵⁸ Håland, “Athena’s Peplos: Weaving as a Core Female Activity in Ancient and Modern Greece,” 160. Other olive wood idols, or images, are in Herodotus. He records that the land of the Epidaurians bore no produce. When they inquired at Delphi, “the priestess bade them set up images of Damia and Auxesia,” goddesses of fertility. The Epidaurians considered images of bronze or stone, but the priestess told them to make the images of olive wood. The Epidaurians then requested olive trees from the Athenians to help produce fruit in their land, since Athenian trees were holy, and the Athenians agreed, on the understanding the Epidaurians would pay yearly sacred dues to Athena, Herodotus, *Herodotus of Halicarnassus*, 316.

In addition to Athena's statue, the Acropolis possessed a grove of sacred olive trees. Robertson argues that there were twelve olive trees, and their purpose was to supply oil as prizes for the Panathenaia.⁴⁵⁹ He further writes that the Athenians called these twelve trees *μοῖραι*, ranging in meaning from "part, share" to "doom," or "fate," and that "The twelve trees are the twelve phratries that make up the whole of Athens' territory."⁴⁶⁰

In another of Athens' festivals, the olive tree figures prominently as well. Pausanias notes that during the festival of Delphinia, "maidens ... bearing a branch or branches of the sacred olive-tree wreathed in white wool," led the procession to the temple of Apollo.⁴⁶¹

The olive tree also figures in Greek Olympic celebrations. Young notes that Altis, the sanctuary at Olympia, possessed a sacred olive tree. He is uncertain as to how a certain tree in the grove came by the title "sacred," but states that it was from this tree that, "the sponsors cut the olive branches that were given as the victor's prizes."⁴⁶²

Victor's crowns of olives extended beyond games and, apparently, were prizes for those who brought victory in war.⁴⁶³ Herodotus describes an occasion where the Lacedaemonians

⁴⁵⁹ Noel Robertson, *Festivals and Legends: The Formation of Greek Cities in the Light of Public Ritual*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 108. So too Jenifer Neils, "Monumental Representations of Government," in *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, ed. Hans Beck (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 430.

⁴⁶⁰ Robertson, *Festivals and Legends: The Formation of Greek Cities in the Light of Public Ritual*, 108.

⁴⁶¹ Pausanias, *Pausanias: Description of Greece*. trans., J.G. Frazer, 6 vols., vol. 3 (London; New York: MacMillan and Co., Limited; The MacMillan Company, 1898), 57.

⁴⁶² David C. Young, *A Brief History of the Olympic Games*. (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 53. Lunt notes that tradition credits Herakles with "re-founding the Olympic games and introducing the olive crown as a prize," David L. Lunt, "The Heroic Athlete in Ancient Greece," *Journal of Sport History* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 379. Herodotus confirms the giving of an olive branch crown as the Olympic prize in Herodotus, *Herodotus with an English Translation*, 27. In the same place, one learns this olive branch may symbolize competing for glory of achievement rather than money. Euripides, in a play concerning Alexander (Paris), indicates that Alexander received, "... a holy branch of olive," for his victory in an unnamed competition, Page, ed. *Greek Literary Papyri*, 59. In addition to the Olympics, apparently one could win an olive crown by boxing, as did the son of Chilon, in Capps, Page, and Rouse, eds., *The Greek Anthology*, 53. Bunson notes that the visage of Pax, goddess of peace, wore the olive crown, Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. "Pax."

⁴⁶³ Xerxes apparently had a vision that he possessed an olive bough crown, whose "shoots spread over the whole earth," and this was evidence of his right to conquest, Herodotus, *Herodotus of Halicarnassus*, 392.

bestowed a crown of olive to Eurybiades for his role in the sea battle of Salamis, and gave an olive crown to Themistocles, along with “the finest chariot in Sparta,” for “his wisdom and cleverness,” apparently regarding the same battle of Salamis.⁴⁶⁴

In another text, Epimenides, after purifying Athens from “the epidemic and the mental affliction prevalent among the Athenian people,” refused any reward save “a branch from the sacred olive-tree in the acropolis.”⁴⁶⁵ The text indicates a branch, not necessarily a crown, but the idea seems to be the same.⁴⁶⁶

The use of olive crowns or boughs on the head appears in magic rituals as well. While the sources one searched did not indicate whether the boughs were from sacred trees, it appears there is some belief that placing a bough on one’s head is necessary for the efficacy of enacting spells.⁴⁶⁷ Similarly, in one spell, one must place a likeness of the Egyptian moon goddess Selene into a shrine made of olive wood.⁴⁶⁸

The cutting of olive branches from a sacred tree that were in a sacred grove located at a sanctuary, as a prize for an Olympic winner, appears to run contrary to Greek laws regarding such sanctuaries. Dillon notes that since worshippers at sanctuaries continued in daily activities,

⁴⁶⁴ Herodotus, *Herodotus with an English Translation*, 127.

⁴⁶⁵ George Grote, *History of Greece*. vol. 3 (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1852), 86.

⁴⁶⁶ In Eumenides, a prophetess (of Apollo), enters the temple and sees a man holding a branch of olive, “crowned with a tuft of wool exceedingly large – white was the fleece,” Aeschylus, *Aeschylus: Agamenon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides, Fragments*. ed. E. Capps, D.L. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, trans., Herbert Weir Smyth, II vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. II (London; New York: William Heinemann; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), 275-276. This is apparently Apollo. Beneath him is the blood stained omphalos, or white stone, which the Delphinians regarded as “the exact centre of the earth,” *ibid.*, 275. c.f. Harrison, who argues it was a beehive tomb, reputed as the grave of the Python or Dionysos, Jane E. Harrison, “Delphika.-(A) The Erinyes. (B) The Omphalos,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 19, (1899): 225. Terrien draws parallels between the omphalos as the center of the earth, and the possible belief among the Hebrews that Solomon’s temple is built upon “a rock, which is the earth-center,” Samuel Terrien, “The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion,” *Vetus Testamentum* XX, no. 3 (July 1970): 317. This white stone and temple imagery may influence the white stone reference in Rev. 2:17, “To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.” For a speculative article on the relationship of the shape of the omphalos to its cultic uses, see Philip W. Kuchel, “Ancient Omphalos at Delphi: Geometrically A Space-Inverting Anamorphoscope,” *Archaeometry* 53, no. 2 (2011).

⁴⁶⁷ Eitrem, “Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual,” 178.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

such as cooking, eating, and bathing, concern arose to protect the sacred trees from use as firewood to cook or heat for warmth, or use in warming bath water.⁴⁶⁹ This concern led to laws that prohibited, “chopping, hacking, and defoliation,” and any “broken boughs of olive and other trees ... were not to be collected for human use but were to remain where they fell, and were to be sacrificed to Hymetho.”⁴⁷⁰ Dillon continues by noting that laws prohibited the cutting of wood at the shrine of Apollo in Athens and similarly forbade the carrying out of wood and branches, “with or without leaves.”⁴⁷¹

This prohibition against cutting or removing olive wood, as it relates to stumps, seems to stem from the events of the Persians, under Xerxes, burning the Acropolis and the sacred olive tree of Athena.⁴⁷² After the Persians burned the sacred olive tree, there was the belief that a shoot, “about a cubit’s length sprung from the stump.”⁴⁷³ All stumps in Attica then, whether damaged by invading armies or lightening, “were fenced about for their preservation,” and “...regularly inspected by commissioners of the Areopagus,” because they, like the stump on the Acropolis, “might revive.”⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁹ Matthew P.J. Dillon, "The Ecology of the Greek Sanctuary," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 118, (1997): 115.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. Wallace notes that under Solon, a council comprising “all ex-archons serving for life,” adjudicated trials relating to “harming Athens’ sacred olive trees,” Robert W. Wallace, "Councils in Greek Oligarchies and Democracies," in *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, ed. Hans Beck, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 200.

⁴⁷¹ Dillon, "The Ecology of the Greek Sanctuary," 115-116. Dillon does note that laws regarding the use of dead wood from sacred groves vary from sanctuary to sanctuary. At Gortyn, Crete, for instance, he writes that dead wood was no longer sacred, *ibid.* Lysias presents an interesting case in the study of law regarding the sacred olive. Apparently, Athenians believed that all olive trees in Attica were sacred, due to being “offshoots of the tree originally planted by Athene on the Acropolis,” Lysias, "Before the Areopagus: Defense in the Matter of the Olive Stump," 144. In this particular instance, a defendant is “accused ... of removing a sacred olive-tree from his farm,” *ibid.*

⁴⁷² Kousser records this took place in 480 B.C.E., Rachel Kousser, "Destruction and Memory on the Athenian Acropolis," *Art Bulletin* 9, no. 3 (September 2009): 264.

⁴⁷³ Herodotus, *Herodotus with an English Translation*, 51.

⁴⁷⁴ Lysias, "Before the Areopagus: Defense in the Matter of the Olive Stump," 144. Apparently, one could lose their land for removing a stump during the time of Lysias, *ibid.*, 147. However, Grote writes that in early times, one was charged “two hundred drachms” for the destruction and “the rooting up of an olive tree, except for sacred purposes,” or up to “two trees per annum for the convenience of the proprietor,” Grote, *History of Greece*, 135.

Another important aspect of the olive tree relates to the life cycle of its fruit. The Athenian festivals corresponded to the production cycle of the olive tree, “from the flowering of the olive tree, growing period of the fruit, until the gathering in winter.”⁴⁷⁵ As women participated substantially in Athenian festivals, this production cycle represented a girl’s rite of passage from “puberty to prepare them for marriage.”⁴⁷⁶

The correspondence of the olive production cycle and festivals apparently holds true with respect to the Oschophoria festival as well. An Athenian festival in early autumn, it was apparently sponsored by a group called the “Salaminians,” who, in addition to worshipping Athena, served Pandrosus, “the goddess of the sacred olive tree on the Acropolis...” of Athens.⁴⁷⁷ The reason for serving Pandrosus is that “salt is used in steeping olives.”⁴⁷⁸

One finds this sacredness of the olive tree in the cycle of life and death at Delos as well. Catullus, in his poem about Diana, indicates a belief that Leto gave birth to Diana beside an olive tree on Delos.⁴⁷⁹ There was a tomb at the entrance to the temple of Artemis on Delos, placed

⁴⁷⁵ Håland, "The Ritual Year of Athena: The Agricultural Cycle of the Olive, Girls' Rites of Passage, and Official Ideology," 256. The cycle of the olive tree may also have helped to define the seasons of the ancient Mediterranean, particularly winter. Sallares argues that, “bioclimatic indicators,” such as the “distribution of the olive tree,” present “alternative definitions of Mediterranean-climate regions.” By this he means, “The distribution of the olive tree, which is killed by severe frost but requires temperatures to drop to a certain level to initiate flowering the following year, defines the Mediterranean winter,” Robert Sallares, "Environmental History," in *A Companion to Ancient History*, ed. Andrew Erskine (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 165-166.

⁴⁷⁶ Håland, "The Ritual Year of Athena: The Agricultural Cycle of the Olive, Girls' Rites of Passage, and Official Ideology," 256. Håland says that the peplos was a common wedding gift, and the presentation of Athena with a new peplos reflected the idea that there was a marriage pact between Athens and Athena Polias, Håland, "Athena's Peplos: Weaving as a Core Female Activity in Ancient and Modern Greece," 160. One wonders if there is a connection between this marriage and the preparation for marriage of the young women.

⁴⁷⁷ Robertson, *Festivals and Legends: The Formation of Greek Cities in the Light of Public Ritual*, 128.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ Francese and Smith, eds., *Ancient Rome: An Anthology of Sources*, 30. In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Latona gives birth to twins beneath an olive tree on Delos as well, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, 143. See also, Ovid, "The Lycian Peasants," in *Metamorphoses* (London; New York: Penguin Books, 2004).

under a sacred olive tree, where two Hyperborean maidens lay.⁴⁸⁰ They died on isle on their way bringing offerings to Apollo.⁴⁸¹

One also finds olive oil is significant in the life and death cycle as it relates to Greek burial rites. Felton notes that upon death, Greek women would wash and anoint a body, dress it in cloth, and “lay it on a bier for the family to perform the traditional lament and pay their last respects.”⁴⁸² The family would then “... make offerings of food, wine, olive oil, and various household possessions,” so that the deceased would have them in the afterlife.⁴⁸³

While many literary records do not record the exact reason for the sacredness of the olive, one cannot help but wonder if this owes to the fact of its incredible age and difficulty in growing due to the need for grafts.⁴⁸⁴

In addition to the cultic value of sacred trees, the economic value of the olive tree is difficult to overstate, particularly for its production of oil and wood.⁴⁸⁵ With respect to

⁴⁸⁰ Although not related to Delos, one further finds its appearance in the life and death cycle on a tomb inscription, which asks Earth to receive into its bosom one deceased Amyntichus, because he planted olive trees, Capps, Page, and Rouse, eds., *The Greek Anthology*, 173.

⁴⁸¹ Herodotus, *Herodotus of Halicarnassus*, 230. See also James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*. Third ed., vol. 1 (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 28.

⁴⁸² David Felton, "The Dead," in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, ed. Daniel Ogden (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), 87.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ One can see the great age of olive trees in a study conducted by a group of scholars studying the eight olive trees currently standing in the Garden of Gethsemane. The group determined they are around nine centuries old, making them among the oldest olive trees in the world today, Raffaella Petruccelli, Cristiana Giordano, Maria Cristina Salvatici, Laura Capozzoli, Leonardo Ciaccheri, Massimo Pazzini, Orietta Lain, Raffaele Testolin, and Antonio Cimato, "Observation of Eight Ancient Olive Trees (*Olea Europaea* L.) Growing in the Garden of Gethsemane," *Comptes Rendus Biologies* 337, (2014): 317.

⁴⁸⁵ While one has focused on olive trees, olive wood, olives, and oil, one also found a rare reference to the use of olive leaves. Frölich records that in Syracuse, citizens who wished to see someone exiled would write the name of the potential exile on an olive leaf in the hope of gaining a five year exile, Pierre Frölich, "Governmental Checks and Balances," in *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, ed. Hans Beck, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 254.

profitability, Faust and Ehud argue that, “wine production was the most ‘profitable’ activity in the typical Mediterranean economy. The second most ‘profitable’ crop was olives ...”⁴⁸⁶

One finds the value of olive oil, particularly, to be great.⁴⁸⁷ Laurence indicates that the winners of stade races at the Great Panathenaia “would receive one hundred amphorae filled with high quality olive oil, which was a hugely substantial prize.”⁴⁸⁸ Similarly, at the Panathenaia, “decorated jars of olive oil,” were prizes to attract those “luminaries of athletics and music who competed in the stephanitic, or ‘crown,’ games,” at other locations as well.⁴⁸⁹

While the uses of olive oil were probably many, from cosmetics, lamp fuel, and medicine,⁴⁹⁰ ancients also used it for food.⁴⁹¹ Tyree and Stefanoudaki argue that olive oil made

⁴⁸⁶ Avraham Faust and Ehud Weiss, “Between Assyria and the Mediterranean World: The Prosperity of Judah and Philistia in the Seventh Century B.C.E. in Context,” in *Interweaving Worlds: Systemic Interactions in Eurasia, 7th to 1st Millennia B.C.*, ed. Toby C. Wilkinson, Susan Sherratt, and John Bennett (2011), 192. There was apparently a time in Attic history, under Solon, when olive oil was the only product of Attica that Athenians could export, Grote, *History of Greece*, 135.

⁴⁸⁷ For the use of olive oil in later magical spells, see Jonathon Z. Smith, “Great Scott! Thought and Action One More Time,” in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, ed. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2002), 91. There, Smith records a spell, which he translates, “You are olive oil, you are not the olive oil, but the sweat of Good Daimon, the mucus of Isis....”

⁴⁸⁸ Karen A. Laurence, “Roman Infrastructural Changes to Greek Sanctuaries and Games: Panhellenism in the Roman Empire, Formations of New Identities” (Dissertation, Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2012), 49. Laurence cites scholars arguing for a value of between \$39,600 USD and \$121,000 USD as of 2012. This was likely a very large sum in antiquity.

⁴⁸⁹ Andersen, *The Athenian Experiment: Building an Imagined Political Community in Ancient Attica, 508-490 B.C.*, 159. According to Håland, the oil in these decorated jars came from the twelve sacred olive trees, which symbolized the twelve brotherhoods, that stood in the (Plato’s) Academy, Håland, “The Ritual Year of Athena: The Agricultural Cycle of the Olive, Girls’ Rites of Passage, and Official Ideology,” 268. In the same place, Håland argues that these twelve trees, “...were supposed to be descended directly from the first olive tree, created by Athena in her contest with Poseiden for the sovereignty of Attika.” It is likely that a better translation of “decorated jars,” is “painted amphoras.” Hadziaslani, in her pamphlet on the Panathenaic games, argues that these amphoras were, “black-figured pots...executed against a red background,” and that these amphoras were exclusive to the Panathenaic games from the 5th century B.C.E. forward, Cornelia Hadziaslani, *Prizes from Athens: The Panathenaic Games*. (Athens: Acropolis Restoration Service -- Department of Information and Education, 2003), 4.

⁴⁹⁰ Scarborough indicates that ancient Greeks prescribed “olive oil for open ulcers [or wounds],” and Chicory, “mixed with an equal part of the oil of unripe olives,” for headaches, Scarborough, “The Pharmacology of Sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots,” 148, 155.

⁴⁹¹ Tyree and Stefanoudaki argue that olive oil was a principal ingredient in soaps, bath and skin oil, perfume, cosmetics, and appears especially in “the great Roman bath houses,” E. Loeta Tyree and Evagelia Stefanoudaki, “The Olive Pit and Roman Oil Making,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 59, no. 3 (September 1996): 171. Olive oil’s use in baths is also found in Homer’s *Odyssey*, where Polycaste anoints Telemachus with olive after his bath, and, later, the mother of Nausicaa gives to her a golden flask of soft olive for her bath, and which she in turn, gives to Odysseus, Homer, *The Odyssey*, 103, 213, 223.

up “one-third” the “caloric content of a peasant diet in such areas as Greece and Italy, with a probable annual consumption of about fifty liters per person.”⁴⁹²

In one brief example, Kokoszko and Gibel-Buszevska believe that olive oil is an ingredient in the gravy or liquid stock of the ancient delicacy called Kandalous, a dish with various descriptions, but including cheese, dill, meat, milk, animal fat, bread, and olive oil.⁴⁹³ In one literary passage, part of the suffering of Tantalus in Hades is that whenever he reached out to eat of the “luxuriant olives,” that hung above his head, “the wind would toss them to the shadowy clouds.”⁴⁹⁴

This historic information gives necessary and important background for the cultural role of olive trees, olives, and olive oil in Greek culture. Since metaphors and associated common places find their meaning in cultures, one cannot overlook this information.

However, one cannot help but wonder if one of the most important piece of information for understanding the role of olive trees and their associated products in ancient Greece, as they relate to the metaphor of olive trees in Rev. 11, is the oath of Athenian *ephebes*. Cole translates a fourth century B.C.E. oath as reading:

“...and I shall not hand down a diminished fatherland, but one increased in size and strength as far as I am able and [working together] with the assistance of all ... I shall also honour the ancestral sacred rites. The witnesses [to this oath] are: the gods Aglauros, Hestia, Enyo, Enyalios, Ares and Athena Areia, Zeus, Thallo, Auxo, Hegemone, Herakles [and] the boundaries of my fatherland, and the wheat, the barley, the vines, the olives, the figs.”⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Tyree and Stefanoudaki, "The Olive Pit and Roman Oil Making." Seti I gave olive oil as rations to the king's messenger and standard-bearers, though the amount and purpose are omitted, James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*. ed. William Rainey Harper, 5 vols., Ancient Records, vol. 3: The Nineteenth Dynasty (Chicago; London; Leipzig: The University of Chicago Press; Luzac & Co.; Otto Harrassowitz, 1906), 90.

⁴⁹³ Maciej Kokoszko and Katarzyna Gibel-Buszevska, "Kandalous. The Testimony of Select Sources," *Studia Ceranea* 1, (2011): 13, 14, 18.

⁴⁹⁴ Homer, *The Odyssey*, 429.

⁴⁹⁵ Cole, "Greek Religion," 284. Bayliss argues that the earliest this oath appears is 334-333 B.C., Andrew James Bayliss, "Oaths and Citizenship," in *Oath and State in Ancient Greece*, ed. Alan H. Sommerstein and Andrew J. Bayliss, *Beiträge zur Altertumskunde* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 13.

The Athenians inscribed this oath on marble and apparently set it up in the temple of Ares, the god of war.⁴⁹⁶ While the youth may have taken the oath, invoking the olives, other fruits, and gods as witnesses, it seems the inscription itself was also a witness, given its place on marble.

At the age of 18,⁴⁹⁷ candidates proclaimed this oath at the annual festival of Apaturia while wearing black robes.⁴⁹⁸ The seriousness of the oath of the *ephebes*, along with other oaths, are in their juridical nature. The appeal to witnesses reinforces this idea.

This oath may be one of the only extant places in literature where the words olive and witnesses appear in near co-text. If the translation is correct, then the soldiers' invocation of the olives, along with the other produce of Greece, as witnesses, would be a metaphor like Rev. 11. The ephebic oath has the, "The witnesses are ... olives." In Revelation, the metaphor is, "The two witnesses are the two olive trees..."

The Greek text of the two metaphors does have differences. The text of the Ephebic oath, edited to take out the gods and other fruits of Athens which also serve as witnesses, presents the surface metaphor of "The witnesses are olives," as "Ἰστορες ἐλάαι."⁴⁹⁹ The Ephebic oath implies

⁴⁹⁶ Guthrie S. Birkhead and Malcolm MacLaren, "The Ephebic Oath," *Public Administration Review* 42, no. 2 (Nov-Dec. 1982): 598.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. So also John Wilson Taylor, "The Athenian Ephebic Oath," *The Classical Journal* 13, no. 7 (April 1918): 495.

⁴⁹⁸ Kozak states that these robes, *chlamys*, were "to represent the mourning of Theseus," Lynn Kozak, "Greek Government and Education: Re-examining the *ephebeia*," in *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, ed. Hans Beck, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient Greek World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 306.

⁴⁹⁹ Siewert records the text of the oath in, Peter Siewert, "The Ephebic Oath in Fifth-Century Athens," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97, (1977): 103. The word for witness, ἵστορες, likely is a form of ἵστορεω, which is the process of making an inquiry, or the asking of questions based on one's experiences, and the basis of the English word history, Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, s.v. "ἵστορεω." *Greek-English Lexicon* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1883). Many translators, including Siewert, render Liddell and Scott's definition of "one making an inquiry" as "witness."

the verb, whereas the Greek of Rev. 11:4 is, οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι, these are the two olive trees. The pronoun, these, refers to witnesses in Rev. 11:3 and the word there is μάρτυσιν.

Concerning oaths in general, Bayliss writes, "Oaths were the glue that held the ancient Greek city together."⁵⁰⁰ Having recorded this, he continues by noting that the *ephebic* oath was one oath in a series of oaths, which adolescents must swear to attain Athenian citizenship.⁵⁰¹ There is evidence that those taking the oath must extend their right hand over the altar of Zeus Phratrios, or grasp the altar with their right hand.⁵⁰²

The purpose of the oath, according to Bayliss, is first for the candidate to attain citizenship. However, the military nature of the oath also demonstrates that one cannot separate citizenship and military service in Athens.⁵⁰³ The candidate swears to defend the homeland and to obey leaders and laws, so long as they are reasonable.⁵⁰⁴

Witnesses were an important element in this process of attaining citizenship. Apparently, a father had to present his children to his phratry twice to confirm their legitimacy. The first time, when the children were infants, a father had to present his son, adopted son, or daughter, before his phratry in order that it accept them as legitimate and enter them into the family register.⁵⁰⁵ The father had to swear an oath to the legitimacy of the child. The second time was around the age of 16, where the father had to present the child again, and again swear an oath.⁵⁰⁶ If accepted, the Athenians considered the child a citizen. If the phratry rejected the legitimacy of the child, and the child's appeal failed, the Athenians sold the rejected child into slavery.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁰ Bayliss, "Oaths and Citizenship," 9.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 14.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 16, 19.

⁵⁰⁴ Siewert, "The Ephebic Oath in Fifth-Century Athens," 103-104; Edward M. Harris, "The Rule of Law in Athenian Democracy. Reflections on the Judicial Oath," *Etica and Politica* IX, no. 1 (2007): 56.

⁵⁰⁵ Bayliss, "Oaths and Citizenship," 12.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁰⁷ Taylor, "The Athenian Ephebic Oath," 495.

In the legitimation procedure, witnesses would stand either for or against the child's acceptance into the community. If the phratry rejected the child, Bayliss states, "Witnesses who spoke on behalf of the rejected candidate were also required to swear an oath while holding the altar of Zeus Phratrios, an obvious pointer to the threat from the gods posed to those who swore falsely."⁵⁰⁸ These witnesses were swearing to the legitimacy of the child as being of the presenting father and his wedded wife. This legitimacy was key for those who would later become *ephebes*, since one could only attain citizenship if legitimate.⁵⁰⁹

The appearance of the altar in the oath of the phratry witnesses is like the procedure surrounding the ephebic oath and adds an additional word, "altar," from the context of the metaphor of "witnesses are olives," to the similarities of John's metaphor in Rev. 11, as John uses the word altar as well. One cannot help but wonder if Greek readers of Revelation would see any connection between the juridical, militaristic, and civic nature of the ephebic oath, and the context of Revelation 11.

The sacred nature of the olive tree occasionally appears in Roman religion as well. Just as Athena created the olive in Greek tradition, her counterpart in the Roman pantheon, Minerva, also created the olive.⁵¹⁰

Just as Greeks associated olive trees with temples and shrines, so did the Romans. For instance, the Temple of Fortuna Primigenia rests upon the place where, supposedly, honey

⁵⁰⁸ Bayliss, "Oaths and Citizenship," 12.

⁵⁰⁹ Olga Palagia, "Akropolis Museum 581: A Family at the Apaturia?," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 64, no. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1995): 496-497.

⁵¹⁰ Arthur S. Way, *The Georgics of Virgil*. (London; New York: Macmillan and Co., Limited; The Macmillan Co., 1912), 3. While Greek and Roman traditions credit Athena and Minerva with creating the olive tree, Cicero records that Aristaeus was "the reputed discoverer of the olive," Cicero, *Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes: De Natura Deorum Academica*. ed. E.H. Warmington, trans., H. Rackham, XXVIII vols., The Loeb Classical Library, vol. XIX (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann LTD, 1967), 329.

miraculously flowed from an olive tree.⁵¹¹ The temple to Juno at Carthage rested in a grove of olive trees,⁵¹² and Virgil proclaimed that Bacchus walked among the “copses ... of the slowly-growing olive-tree.”⁵¹³

As with Greek festivals, the olive could figure prominently in Roman festivals. The Parilia, a Roman festival celebrating the health of livestock, requires a shepherd to burn the wood of male olive trees, along with pine and juniper, to offer ritual prayer, millet cakes, and warm milk, to Pales.⁵¹⁴

Olive trees, olive wood, olives, and olive oil also appear in Roman literary works. Ovid references them regularly, but, in a religious sense, he writes that the Calidonians sought relief from Theseus by offering gifts to the gods, which included “a fat of olives, to Minerva’s shrine.”⁵¹⁵

In Rome, it appears that olives and olive trees were not immediately significant, as far as agriculture and economy are concerned. One infers this from Momigliano, who writes, regarding the area of the Roman hills, that “wheat, wine, olive oil, and even apples were apparently relative novelties in the early eighth century B.C.”⁵¹⁶ However, this would change as Rome grew in power and influence.

Olives and olive oil were essential to Roman trade, particularly from Africa. As early as the 2nd century B.C.E., one reads that Hannibal apparently encouraged efforts in Carthage after

⁵¹¹ Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: A Sourcebook*. vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 98.

⁵¹² Evelyn Wolfson, *Roman Mythology*. Mythology (Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2002), 71.

⁵¹³ Way, *The Georgics of Virgil*, 31. Not only did Virgil identify the olive as slow growing, but also as long-lived, *ibid.*, 39.

⁵¹⁴ Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome: A Sourcebook*, 116-117.

⁵¹⁵ Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 198. Virgil writes of the fatness of olives, concerning their size and how not all grow the same, but the differences in the word “fat” are difficult to discern, Way, *The Georgics of Virgil*, 35.

⁵¹⁶ A. Momigliano, “The Origins of Rome,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History: The Rise of Rome to 220 B.C.*, ed. F.W. Walbank F.B.A. et al. (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 63.

201 B.C.E. to increase olive production for expanding trade with Rome and Italy.⁵¹⁷ Bunson writes that Tunisia, Numidia, and Mauretania grew enough olives to the extent that by the second century [C.E.] the olive harvest there was nearly equal to the corn harvest.⁵¹⁸ Bunson further indicates that the region of Achaia, in the Greek Peloponnese, was a major source of olive exports/imports for the Roman Empire.⁵¹⁹ The Romans transported these olives, and olive oil, in amphorae, via ship, as several ship wrecks attest.⁵²⁰

Among other uses, olive oil was an essential part of Roman life because it was the fuel for lamps. Bunson states that every Roman house, whether poor or wealthy, had a basic oil lamp, “filled with olive oil.”⁵²¹

As with Greece, olives and olive oil are a critical part of the Roman diet. As Tyree and Stefanoudaki note above, olive oil is a food staple of ancient Rome and Italy. This was apparently true for the Roman military as well. Erdkamp indicates that Rome paid its soldiers in food rations, which included olive oil, when available.⁵²²

Bunson indicates that Romans ate three meals a day, taking breakfast at sunrise. This breakfast often consisted of “bread or biscuits ... flavored with honey, salt, olives, or dates...”⁵²³

⁵¹⁷ A.E. Astin, F.W. Walbank F.B.A., M.W. Frederiksen, and R.M. Ogilvie, eds., *Rome to the Mediterranean to 133 B.C.*, Second ed., The Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 148.

⁵¹⁸ Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. “Africa.” In the same article, Bunson previously argues that corn is the staple of the Roman Empire and Africa was critical for the corn supply. That the olive harvest grew to be nearly equal to the corn harvest is noteworthy.

⁵¹⁹ Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. “Trade and Commerce.”

⁵²⁰ Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. “Amphora.”

⁵²¹ Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. “Furnishings.”

⁵²² Paul Erdkamp, “War and State Formation in the Roman Republic,” in *A Companion to the Roman Army*, ed. Paul Erdkamp, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 102. Bunson notes that Gallia produced olives as well and these “kept the legions on the Rhine well fed,” Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. “Gallia.”

⁵²³ Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. “Food and Drink, Roman.”

The ancient Romans mixed olive oil with vinegar and rubbed it on ham as part of the curing and preservation process.⁵²⁴

3.7.2 *Olive Trees/Olives/Olive Oil in Israel and Canaan*

Before moving into a discussion of Israel and Judah, one notes that, although the seven churches in the province of Asia are the immediate recipients of the Book of Revelation, the text of Revelation relies primarily upon the cultural and literary background of the OT, rooted geographically in the land area of Palestine and its immediate neighbors.⁵²⁵

Additionally, significant to this discussion, is Sallares' assertion that the temperatures, at least today, in Southwestern Anatolia, near the region the seven churches, is too cold to support the growth of olive trees.⁵²⁶ He speculates that it is possible that ancient temperatures could have been 2-3C higher than today, since modern archaeologists have discovered olive oil and olive presses in the region.⁵²⁷ However, the presence of oil and presses does not necessitate the presence of trees. Given the trade of olives that took place in the Roman Empire, it is plausible the region imported olives and pressed them.⁵²⁸ This does not mean, however, the region of the seven churches was without knowledge of the olive tree and its importance.

One notes the above information to write that the search for associated common places regarding the olive tree is wider than the geographical area of the seven churches, and extends to

⁵²⁴ Zofia Rzeźnicka, Maciej Kokoszko, and Krzysztof Jagusiak, "Cured Meats in Ancient and Byzantine Sources: Ham, Bacon, and Tuccetum," *Studia Ceranea* 4, (2014): 247-248.

⁵²⁵ Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, 60.

⁵²⁶ Sallares, "Environmental History," 167. Grote asserts as well, citing Cicero, Strabo, and Herodotus, that the central plains of Asia Minor were too cold for olives, Grote, *History of Greece*, 205.

⁵²⁷ Sallares, "Environmental History," 167.

⁵²⁸ Bunson writes that the region of Cilicia in Asia Minor, particularly Campestris, exported olives, Matthew Bunson, *Encyclopedia of the Roman Empire*, Revised ed. (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002), s.v. "Cilicia." It is not difficult to image that these olives could have made their way from south-central Asia Minor to the region of the seven churches.

the Mediterranean at large. More specifically, it extends to the influences of the olive tree in the OT and NT, and the culture of the land of Israel and its immediately surrounding regions.

The cultures of ancient Israel and Judah in the land area of Palestine, shared with groups of Canaanites, depended on olive trees and their fruits and products, such as olive oil, as much as other locations in the ancient Mediterranean. This is certainly true of the Philistines and their five cities in the southwest of Palestine, along the Mediterranean Sea. Faust and Weiss, in arguing that Ekron was a major center of prosperity in the seventh century B.C.E., state that with only four percent of the ancient 75-acre site excavated, archaeologists have found “115 olive oil installations.”⁵²⁹ They estimate these installations produced 500 tons of olive oil a year, “making Ekron the largest ancient industrial centre for the production of olive oil excavated to date.”⁵³⁰ Another important Philistine city, imported its olive oil, “from the Inner Coastal Plain and the Shephelah.”⁵³¹

To the north of Philistia, there is evidence that olive oil may have been in use in ancient Ugarit, in the region of Syria, as part of the libation offerings of certain ritual temple ceremonies.⁵³² To the south and east of Israel, the Nabateans planted olive groves within the city center of Petra as early as the 2nd century B.C. and expanded towards the 1st century A.D.⁵³³

⁵²⁹ Faust and Weiss, "Between Assyria and the Mediterranean World: The Prosperity of Judah and Philistia in the Seventh Century B.C.E. in Context," 190.

⁵³⁰ Ibid. Beaulieu agrees that Ekron is the largest production center of olive oil found, Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "World Hegemony, 900-300 B.C.E.," in *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, ed. Daniel C. Snell (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 53. See also Seymour Gitin, "Excavating Ekron," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 31, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 2005).

⁵³¹ Faust and Weiss, "Between Assyria and the Mediterranean World: The Prosperity of Judah and Philistia in the Seventh Century B.C.E. in Context," 190. Noegel argues the Philistines were “highly advanced, especially in farming, building, metallurgy, and the production of olive oil,” Scott B. Noegel, "Greek Religion and the Ancient Near East," in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, ed. Daniel Ogden, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria, AU: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007), 29.

⁵³² Nicolas Wyatt, "Religion in Ancient Ugarit," in *A Handbook of Ancient Religions*, ed. John R. Hinnells (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 139.

⁵³³ Charlene Bouchaud, Christiane Jacquat, and Danièle Martinoli, "Landscape Use and Fruit Cultivation in Petra (Jordan) from Early Nabatean to Byzantine Times (2nd Century B.C. - 5th Century A.D.)," *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 26, no. 2 (March 2017): 223. The authors indicate that the carpological record demonstrates olive in

In Israel, one finds the value of the olive in both the ancient biblical record as well as the historical archaeological record. From a historical archaeological standpoint, Borowski's book on agriculture is one of the few works dealing with agriculture in Israel, specifically at its earliest stages.⁵³⁴

In a chapter entitled "Orchards and Vineyards," Borowski argues, "The earliest stones of domesticated olives were found at Teleilat Ghassul," and this was from the "Chalcolithic period (fourth millennium B.C.E.)."⁵³⁵ Borowski also notes that archaeologists have found olives stones from the same era at "En-gedi and at Tell Mashosh near Beer-sheba."⁵³⁶ He goes on to indicate that nearly a dozen Early and Middle Bronze age sites have revealed olives as well.⁵³⁷

The palynological record supports this chronology as well. Zeist, et. al., demonstrate that olive cultivation, at least in the Hula region of Northeast Israel, began around 4000 B.C. They too argue that Israel in the Early and Middle Bronze ages had "thriving olive cultivation," with declining cultivation, "to virtually disappear in the Iron Age," only to reappear again in the "Persian/Hellenistic and Roman," periods.⁵³⁸

60% of samples in the Nabatean period and 77% of cultivated plant samples in the Roman period, and the olive is the only fruit tree, the other two being vines and figs, whose wood appears in the charcoal analysis at Perea from Nabatean to the Roman era *ibid.*, 231, 234. They note their evidence contradicts Strabo who argued olives did not grow in Perea.

⁵³⁴ Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 117. Galili, et. al., argue that olive stones from previously submerged settlements on the Carmel coast pre-date the Chalcolithic period by 500 years, Ehud Galili, Daniel Jean Stanley, Jacob Sharvit, and Mina Wienstein-Evron, "Evidence for Earliest Olive-Oil Production in Submerged Settlements Off the Carmel Coast, Israel," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 24, (1997): 1141-1143. They also note that due to high pollen counts, it is likely that olive groves were very near the olive presses, making the appearance of olive trees quite early as well, *ibid.*, 1147. Namdar, however, reports the presence of olive oil residue on pottery from the 5th-6th millennia B.C. at Ein Zippori, Northern Israel, Dvory Namdar, "Olive Oil Storage During the Fifth and Sixth Millennia B.C. at Ein Zippori, Northern Israel," *Israel Journal of Plant Sciences* 62, no. 1-2 (2015).

⁵³⁶ Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, 117.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁸ Willem van Zeist, Uri Baruch, and Sytze Bottema, "Holocene Palaeoecology of the Hula Area, Northeastern Israel," in *A Timeless Vale: Archaeology and Related Essays on the Jordan Valley in Honour of Gerrit van der Kooij on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Eva Kaptijn and Lucas P. Petit, Archaeological Studies Leiden University (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009), 29. The authors demonstrate the presence of wild olives in this time as well, *ibid.*, 46. However, they note that the arboreal taxa demonstrates an absence of wild olives in the

Novacek agrees that the early Bronze Age demonstrates the first large-scale cultivation of olive trees in the Southern Levant, and she posits that the increased production may be the result of “urbanization” and “demand for these goods by the pharaohs of Old Kingdom Egypt.”⁵³⁹

If correct, olives at least, not to mention olive trees, appear early in Israel and the Jordan Valley, and indicate their potential use very early in the region. Much later evidence also suggests that during the period of the united monarchy, Beth Shemesh had “large olive-crushing installations.”⁵⁴⁰ While this indicates only the presence of olives, one could speculate given the climate region, that this could also indicate the presence of olive trees in Israel from a very early period.⁵⁴¹

There is also the account of Josephus, much closer to the time of the Apocalypse, in which he compares Galilee and Perea. Perea, which is east of the Jordan River, apparently had fruit trees in all its plains, with the olive tree, vine (grapes), and palm tree chief among these trees.⁵⁴² Similarly, regarding Galilee, he records that the region of Gennesareth has soil so fruitful “that all sorts of trees can grow upon it.” This includes the olive, which requires “an air that is more temperate.”⁵⁴³

While the climate is critical to the growth and cultivation of olive trees, Richter, following Rosen, also notes that olive trees require the “long-term investment” of a sedentary society, in order to take full advantage of its resources.⁵⁴⁴ She goes on to note that it “takes 5-6

Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period, which is the early part of the period almost immediately preceding the Chalcolithic period, but there are wild olives in the late Neolithic period, *ibid.*, 52, 56.

⁵³⁹ Gabrielle Vera Novacek, *Ancient Israel: Highlights from the Collections of the Oriental Institute University of Chicago*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2011), 7.

⁵⁴⁰ Edgar B. Hardesty, “Valleys of Friction: A Regional Consideration of Israelite and Philistine Interrelationships During Their Early Encounters in the Northern Shephelah” (Ph.D. diss., Towson University, 2015), 114.

⁵⁴¹ Unlike the region in Asia Minor of the seven churches, where there were olives, but not trees, because the climate could not support the tree.

⁵⁴² Josephus, “Wars of the Jews,” 3.45.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3.517.

⁵⁴⁴ Sandra Richter, “Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology of Creation Care,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20, no. 3 (2010): 362.

years” for the olive tree “to begin to flower” and up to “20 years to reach full maturity,” and “even then, they only bear fruit every other year.”⁵⁴⁵ Perhaps most telling regarding the nature of a society necessary to grow olive trees, she quotes King and Stager, saying, “It is commonly said that one plants an olive yard not for one’s self but for one’s grandchildren.” This kind of sedentary society perhaps reflects the nature of Israel and the growth of its cultic activities and reflects the importance of the olive in Israel’s life.

As in all other regions where olive trees and olives exist, olive oil is an important substance for the Israelite world, “critical to domestic survival,”⁵⁴⁶ and the economy, as archaeology demonstrates.⁵⁴⁷ In the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Chaney, for instance, argues that Jeroboam II and Uzziah, in the mid-8th century B.C., exported olive oil to pay for their imports of luxury items, military supplies, and building materials.⁵⁴⁸ Finkelstein affirms that in the 8th-Century B.C. economy of Northern Israel, olive oil was a major product of the kingdom, perhaps serving as an export to Egypt and Assyria.⁵⁴⁹

As with other cultures nearby, olives and olive oil were also a food product for those in ancient Israel. Palmer notes that olives were among the chief food products of Israel, along with grapes, as well as dates, pomegranates, and figs.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 366.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 361.

⁵⁴⁷ While one will survey the biblical uses of olive oil, the focus here is on other types of historical data, such as archaeology.

⁵⁴⁸ Marvin L. Chaney, “The Political Economy of Peasant Poverty: What the Eighth-Century Prophets Presumed But Did Not State,” in *The Bible, The Economy, and the Poor*, ed. Ronald A. Simkins and Thomas M. Kelly, Journal of Religion & Society Supplement Series (Omaha, NE: Kripke Center for the Study of Religion and Society at Creighton University, 2014), 36.

⁵⁴⁹ Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*. ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Roxana Flammini, Ancient Near East Monographs (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 112. Richter, following King and Stager, adds Phoenicia and Greece to the export list, Richter, “Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology of Creation Care,” 362.

⁵⁵⁰ Gillian Ann Palmer, “Plants and Trees of Syrio-Palestine: Cultivation and Uses” (M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, May 2009), 5-6.

The Jews of antiquity may have used olive oil for other practical reasons as well. For instance, Dandamayev, citing Aramaic fragments, writes that the Jews in Egypt used olive oil, along with castor oil, for the toilet, although he does not elaborate on specifics.⁵⁵¹ One wonders if this practice was widespread among the Jews of Palestine as well.

3.7.3 *Olive Trees in the Old Testament*

From a biblical, rather than archaeological, historical standpoint, the olive tree is central in the discussion of metaphor as well. Zohary and Spiegel-Roy note that of the seven biblical species of trees, five were fruit trees, including the olive.⁵⁵²

The Greek words for olive tree, olive, and olive oil, are *ἐλαῖαι*, *ἐλαίᾱς*, and *ἐλαιον*. In Hebrew, it appears the word for olive tree and olives are the same, *תַּיִל*, *zā'·yit*, while two words appear for oil, *יֵשׁ־חַר*, *yiṣ·hār*, and, *שֶׁם־שֶׁן*, *šē'·mēn*. While there appears to be little to distinguish the two words for oil, Frick does note that *יֵשׁ־חַר* appears in at least one place with the other major products of the land, grain and wine, while *שֶׁם־שֶׁן* does not ever appear with “other agricultural products.”⁵⁵³ That said, one offers a summary survey of relevant texts that focuses primarily on the Greek words, since these are really the focus of the metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4 that includes olive trees.

⁵⁵¹ M. Dandamayev, "The Diaspora: Babylonia in the Persian Age," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein (Cambridge; New York; Melbourne; Madrid; Cape Town; Singapore; Sao Paulo: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 384.

⁵⁵² Daniel Zohary and Pinhas Spiegel-Roy, "Beginnings of Fruit Growing in the Old World," *Science* 187, (1975): 319.

⁵⁵³ Frank S. Frick, "'Oil From Flinty Rock' (Deuteronomy 32:13): Olive Cultivation and Olive Oil Processing in the Hebrew Bible -- A Socio-Materialist Perspective," in *Food and Drink in the Biblical World*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Willem van Heuter, Semeia (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 3.

The first place the olive tree appears in the LXX is Genesis 8:11, where a dove returns to Noah with the leaf of an olive tree, a dry twig in its mouth.⁵⁵⁴ The Greek for the requisite phrase is φύλλον ἐλαίας κάρφος.⁵⁵⁵ Though he writes with the BHS, Wenham notes that the olive tree was “One of the commonest trees in Palestine and source of invaluable oil, the olive was regarded as a symbol of beauty and fertility.” He also states that the olive “symbolized Israel.”⁵⁵⁶ While these assertions may be true, they do not affect the meaning of Gen. 8:11 in any way that he describes, and such meanings are not immediately evident in the co-text.

Regardless, it demonstrates an early testament to the olive tree in biblical literature and may demonstrate the narrator’s effort to place figurative value on it as the first tree he describes post-flood.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁴ Robert J.V. Hiebert, “Genesis,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10. This translation most explicitly expresses the use of the olive tree, whereas the NRSV and other translation simply call it an olive leaf, not using “tree” or the subsequent word for dry twig.

⁵⁵⁵ The dove returned with the leaf of the olive tree, or dry twig, after seven days. Kissling believes this is the amount of time needed for “an olive tree to leaf out after being under water,” Paul J. Kissling, *Genesis*. ed. Terry Briley and Paul Kissling, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2004), 310. Reyburn and Fry share this view, arguing based on the BHS of Ezek. 17:9, which uses a similar construction. The translators of Ezekiel translate the phrase, “freshly sprouted,” rather than its other possibility, which is “freshly plucked,” William David Reyburn and Euan McGregor Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis*. UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1998), 191. Mathews translates the phrase as “freshly-plucked,” but goes on to define this as “a leaf, newly born,” Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 388. Wenham too believes this is the result of plants growing again, Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 187. The argument for “freshly-sprouted” would need agricultural evidence to assert that an olive tree can sprout leaves a week after submersion to make its case stronger. The BHS contrasts with the LXX, which emphasizes a dry twig, rather than a freshly plucked or freshly sprouted leaf.

⁵⁵⁶ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 187. Wenham’s explanation of olive tree symbolism may fit the literary agenda of the text, but may not reflect historical reality. Assuming the story of the flood is true, one would have to demonstrate the ark rested in Palestine for the commonness of the tree to have any import. His assertion that the olive symbolized Israel is from Jer. 11:16, but he does not connect this to any meaning in the Genesis passage.

⁵⁵⁷ Mathews wonders if early readers would see any connection between the olive leaf and the tabernacle, “where olive oil fueled the menorah in the tabernacle and was added to the mixture of perfumed oil for anointing tabernacle furnishings,” Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 388. This might be an example of metaphorical interpretation, as one defines above, symbolism, or allegory, rather than any reference to a metaphor.

Deuteronomy 8:8 contains the next LXX reference to ἐλαίας in the LXX.⁵⁵⁸ In the co-text, God promises the people of Israel that the land he was bringing them into contained many good things, "... a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey ..."⁵⁵⁹ After stating this, God says in 8:10, "You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you." The implication for the passage is that olive trees, along with other agricultural features, indicates that the land is good.⁵⁶⁰ It is an early testimony of the fruitfulness of the land.

So critical to the narrative is the fruitfulness of the land, that Christensen places 8:8, a part of what he calls the "Song of the good land," at the very center of what he calls a menorah structure, and what one would call a chiasm.⁵⁶¹ For him, 8:8 is the center of a chiasm, and 8:19-20 are "a coda that falls outside the concentric structure," of the prosodic pattern he outlines.⁵⁶² That pattern is:

Be careful to keep God's commandments (8:1)

⁵⁵⁸ Exod. 23:11 does not use ἐλαίας, instead using a similar form, ἐλαιῶνά, for olive grove, *Septuaginta: SESB Edition*. Exod. 23:10 gives the command to let the land lie fallow in the seventh year, so that the land may have rest (a verbal metaphor?) and the poor of the land and the wild animals may eat of it. Exod. 23:11 adds to this, "So shall you do with your vineyard and your olive grove," Larry J. Perkins, "Exodus," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 67. It is an early testament to olive groves in Canaan. Deut. 6:11 uses the same word when God tells the people of Israel that he brought them into the land he swore to their ancestors. God reminds them the land had "... vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant." In Judges 15:5 Samson uses the tails of foxes, tied together and lit on fire, to burn the olive groves of the Philistines. Nehemiah 5:11 (NRSV) or Esdras B 15:11, the Jewish nobles and officials were taking excessive interest from their kindred, perhaps even selling them into slavery. Nehemiah demands that nobles restore the fields, vineyards, olive orchards, and houses that they had taken.

⁵⁵⁹ The NASB translates the word here as olive oil. Perhaps it is following the BHS, which does contain the word מִן־שֶׁן, šē'·mēn, for olive oil, but immediately prior to it also contains the word for olive trees, זֵיתִי, zā'·yit.

⁵⁶⁰ Borowski notes this passage to indicate that, "Fruit trees were an important element of the agricultural economy of Eretz-Israel," Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, 101. Merrill is effusive in his assessment of this verse saying, "No more graphically beautiful landscape of Canaan exists than in the word picture Moses painted here..." Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 186.

⁵⁶¹ Christensen acknowledges the influence of Craigie in identifying that "the central subunit (vv7-10) is perfectly symmetrical in its rhythmic structure," Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-21:9*, 171.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, 170.

Remember how God humbled you to test you in the wilderness (8:2-4)

Keep God's commandments by fearing him (8:5-6)

Song of the good land (8:7-10)

Take heed not to forget God's commandments (8:11)

When you forget YHWH your God, He will humble you (8:12-16)

Remember that it is God who sustains you in the land (8:17-18)

Conclusion [coda]: If you are unfaithful to YHWH you will perish (8:19-20)

The fruitfulness of the land, which includes olive trees, serves as a blessing and a warning within the co-text of Deut. 8:8.⁵⁶³ God reminds Israel of the goodness of the land having thrice told them in 8:1-7 to keep the commandments. Only in keeping the commandments would God allow Israel to remain in this good land.⁵⁶⁴ 8:11 then follows again by telling Israel to keep the commandments and with the exhortation in 8:14 that they not exalt themselves. God even states what the Israelites should not say in exalting themselves, "Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.' (8:17)" Such exaltation leads to idolatry because it derives from forgetting the Lord (8:19-20). Forgetting the Lord leads to destruction, remembering the Lord leads to blessing.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶³ Hall notes that the word land appears six times in this co-text and that the author is contrasting the land with the wilderness, Hall, *Deuteronomy*, 167. Although Hall does not follow up these thoughts in detail, the description of the wilderness in Deut. 8:15 affirms his assertion. Whereas Deut. 8:8 is part of a wonderful description of the good land, Deut. 8:15 describes how God led Israel "... through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna..." The good land is blessing, with plenty of water and food sources, the wilderness is a place of testing for disobedience, it is dry with no food.

⁵⁶⁴ Fuhrmann notes that God fulfills his unconditional promise to the Patriarchs by bringing the people into the land, but there is a conditional element as to whether the people receive God's blessings and stay in the land, Justin M. Fuhrmann, "Deuteronomy 6-8 and the History of Interpretation: An Exposition on the First Two Commandments," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 53, no. 1 (March 2010): 46.

⁵⁶⁵ Merrill notes the connection between covenant faithfulness and blessing and this text, Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 187.

In the end, the olive tree in Deut. 8:8 is a sign of a good land, and occupation of the good land is a sign of blessing. From this passage, olive trees appear in positive light as a sign of good produce and blessing from God.

Deut. 28:40 continues the theme of the olive tree as a blessing from God for obedience, and when Israel disobeys it affects their enjoyment of the olive tree. The whole of Deut. 28 recounts the blessings God's people will receive from him for obedience to the covenant, as well as the curses for transgressing this covenant.⁵⁶⁶ Whereas Deut. 28:1-14 record the blessings, the curse section is larger, from Deut. 28:15-68.⁵⁶⁷ It is within this curse section that Deut. 28:40 writes of olive trees.

God warns Israel that when they transgress the covenant, "You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil, for your olives shall drop off." In 28:42, a more general condemnation summarizes the situation of 28:40, when it states, "All your trees and the fruit of your ground the cicada shall take over."⁵⁶⁸ It is also possible that earlier verses, Deut. 28:22-24, tell how the destruction of the olive trees, among

⁵⁶⁶ Christensen sees this section as relying upon the background of Iron Age treaty oaths, particularly Assyrian loyalty oaths, Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*. ed. Bruce Metzger, The Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 680. See also Zehnder, who outlines and offers critique of opposing viewpoints on this subject, Markus Zehnder, "Building on Stone? Deuteronomy and Esarhaddon's Loyalty Oaths (Part 1): Some Preliminary Observations," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 19, no. 3 (2009).

⁵⁶⁷ Craigie avers that every blessing from previous verses has a converse curse, Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 338. Christensen separates Deut. 28:15-19 from Deut. 28:20ff. 28:15-19 are a basic set of curses, set against the blessings earlier in the chapter. He sees 28:20-69 as extrapolating these curses, doing so in three expansions with 28:20-32 as expansion one, 28:33-44 as expansion two, and 28:45-68 as expansion three, with the remaining verses as summaries and conclusions, Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, 680-695. He believes the first two expansions contain ten prosodic units, five in each, which may parallel the ten plagues of Exod. 7-11, *ibid.*, 681.

⁵⁶⁸ Craigie believes that Deut. 28:38-42, are an expansion of 28:18, Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 346. There, God says, "Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock." Deut. 28:38-42 announces the curses against the fruit of the womb (vs. 41), and against the fruit of the ground (vss. 38-40)

others happens.⁵⁶⁹ There God promises to send blight, mildew, fiery heat, and drought to punish the people.⁵⁷⁰ These would surely kill the trees.⁵⁷¹

Deut. 8:8 and Deut. 28:40, in reference olive trees, contain both aspects of consequences for covenant loyalty and disloyalty. Olive trees are a sign of blessing, prosperity, and goodness from God, whereas their destruction, by whatever instrument, is a sign of a curse for disobedience.

Judges 9:8-9 contain one reference to olive trees in each verse and is one of the more significant texts for one's purposes in this dissertation. The reason is because the references in these verses are clearly figurative, and any figurative use of the olive tree may especially inform the metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4.

The NRSV entitles Judges 9:7-15 the Parable of the Trees. Other authors variously call it the Parable of Jotham,⁵⁷² Jotham's Fable,⁵⁷³ the Fable of the Trees,⁵⁷⁴ or Pflanzenfabel.⁵⁷⁵ The context of Judges 9 is that Abimelech, Gideon's son, has asked the people of Shechem to make him their ruler, setting him above his many brothers. When they agree, Abimelech proceeds to slaughter 70 of his half-brothers on one stone to preserve his rule. However, Jotham, the youngest brothers, hides and escapes the slaughter.

⁵⁶⁹ Christensen sees this as well, placing Deut. 28:20-24 and 28:38-44 as A and A' in a chiasm centered on Deut. 28:30-31, Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, 680.

⁵⁷⁰ Craigie mentions, "The locust, the grapeworm, disease in the olive trees, foreign powers, and crickets, are the instruments with which God would afflict his disobedient people," Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 346.

⁵⁷¹ Merrill, however, sees Deut. 28:38-42 as an "... enveloping structure, one that focuses on the pernicious work of locusts," noting the references here are the only two references to locusts in the entire book of Deuteronomy, Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 364. Hall believes the olive trees are specifically struck by disease, Hall, *Deuteronomy*, 423.

⁵⁷² K. Lawson Younger Jr., s.v. "תִּזְעָזְעָ" ed. Willem VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997).

⁵⁷³ Karin Schöpfli, "Jotham's Speech and Fable as Prophetic Comment on Abimelech's Story," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 18, no. 1 (2004). Fritz, in calling Judges 9:8-15 an independent unit as part of editorial theory of three separate stories in Judges 9, calls it, die Jotam-Fabel, Volkmar Fritz, "Abimelech und Sichem in Jdc. IX," *Vetus Testamentum* 32, no. 2 (April 1982): 132.

⁵⁷⁴ Don K. McKee, "The Role of Self-Interest in Politics: The Biblical Fable of the Trees and the Bramble," *Religion in Life* 29, (1960).

⁵⁷⁵ Fritz, "Abimelech und Sichem in Jdc. IX," 139.

Jotham then later goes to the top of Mount Gerizim and proclaims a parable where trees go out to choose for themselves a king. Judges 9:8 reads, “So they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us.’ The olive tree answered them, ‘Shall I stop producing my rich oil by which gods and mortals are honored, and go to sway over the trees?’” The story continues with the trees asking the fig tree, who declines to keep producing fruit, the vine also declines, to keep producing wine, then they ask the bramble who replies, “If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.”

While the identities of the olive tree, fig tree, and vine are in question, there are two implied (suspended?) metaphors in the parable. The first metaphor is “the lords of Shechem are the trees who went out to anoint a king over themselves.” The second metaphor is “Abimelech is the bramble.” The author of Judges reveals these tenors in Judges 9:19-20.

Based on these two metaphors, one concludes it reasonable that the other trees are metaphors as well, most likely suspended or submerged metaphors. The olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine, would be vehicles in these metaphors lacking an identifiable tenor. Unfortunately, too many commentators and authors concern themselves with the redaction history of the text to the total exclusion of discussing the creative use of metaphor in the parable.⁵⁷⁶

Fritz argues that the fable is not against kingship, but against the wrong kind of kingship.⁵⁷⁷ Maly posits it against those who refused the leadership role in the first place.⁵⁷⁸

Moore believes the parable is a part of pro-monarchical view in Judges, saying “...the major

⁵⁷⁶ E.g. Zev Farber, "Jerubaal, Jacob, and the Battle for Shechem: A Tradition History," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 13, no. 12 (2013).

⁵⁷⁷ “Die Fabel richtet sich somit nicht gegen das Königtum schlechthin, sondern nur gegen die Wahl eines für dieses Amt ungeeigneten Königs,” Fritz, "Abimelech und Sichem in Jdc. IX," 140. Contra Bedford, who writes of an anti-monarchical tradition in Judges 9, Peter R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 67.

⁵⁷⁸ Eugene H. Maly, "The Jotham Fable -- Anti-Monarchical?," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 22, (1960).

reason for Israel's political, social, and spiritual chaos ..." was because there was no king in Israel (Judg. 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25).⁵⁷⁹ One is not inclined to follow any of these interpretations. Within the co-text of Judges, God is the one who calls, empowers, and establishes the judges and rulers of Israel. In the case of Jotham's parable, the people of Shechem take it upon themselves to set up a king, and this by force, e.g. the killing of Abimelech's seventy brothers. Judges 8:23 reinforces this idea when Gideon declares, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you." The lords of Shechem reject God's rule.⁵⁸⁰

In this same declaration, one may learn the tenor of one of the submerged metaphors in the parable of the trees in Judges 9:8-15. In Judges 8:22, the Israelites ask Gideon to rule over them and he refuses. It is possible that since 9:8 records that the trees first ask the olive tree to rule over them and he refuses, that the tenor is Gideon. If so, the metaphor is Gideon is the olive tree.

Gideon's refusal to lead in 8:22ff demonstrates that the emphasis in 8:22ff is not on Gideon's refusal to serve as ruler, but on the Israelites rejection of God's rule. Several times in Judges 9, then, the focus is upon the lords of Shechem searching for someone to rule over them, despite Gideon's advice to the contrary.

Additionally, the idea of acting in good faith, something Jotham believes the lords of Shechem did not do, occurs several times. The men of Shechem are not acting in good faith, as the later story reveals, and they will suffer for this. Although the parable calls Abimelech a

⁵⁷⁹ Michael Moore, "To King or Not to King: A Canonical-Historical Approach to Ruth," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11, no. 1 (2001): 29.

⁵⁸⁰ Butler reaches a similar conclusion Trent C. Butler, *Judges*. The Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville; Dallas; Mexico City; Rio De Janeiro; Beijing: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 234-235.

bramble, presumably a derogatory term, the focus remains on the lords of Shechem since they choose such a fellow, rather than God, to rule over them.⁵⁸¹

Jotham essentially pronounces a curse then,⁵⁸² saying that if the trees are not acting in good faith, then let fire come from the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon, and lets the future decide as to the good faith. The proclamation in 9:15 to let fire consume the cedars of Lebanon, adds to the vehicle of 9:8. It is not just that the trees went out to anoint a king to rule over them, these trees are the cedars of Lebanon.⁵⁸³

As the story progresses, Judges 9:45 states that when enmity arose between Shechem and Abimelech, he captured the city and its people, killed the people, and raised the city to the ground. Fire did come from the bramble and it did consume the cedars of Lebanon.

Regardless of the overall thrust of the story, the trees/cedars of Lebanon in the parable are vehicles in submerged metaphor, where the tenor is probably the lords of Shechem. The bramble is the vehicle for the tenor, Abimelech, in another submerged metaphor. In both instances, trees are the vehicles in metaphors regarding people. If one is correct concerning the tenor of the olive tree metaphor,⁵⁸⁴ then there is a third metaphor where a specific tree represents a person. The

⁵⁸¹ Webb notes that this section regarding Abimelech is a corruption of Deut. 17:15, specifically the phrase in the NIV, "he must be from among your own brothers," Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 272. One believes the real corruption of Deut. 17:15 is from the first phrase in the verse, "... you may indeed set over you a king whom the Lord your God will choose. (NRSV)." God did not choose Abimelech, the lords of Shechem did.

⁵⁸² Tatu calls this a curse as well, Silviu Tatu, "Jotham's Fable and the 'Crux Interpretum' in Judges IX," *Vetus Testamentum* 56, no. 1 (Jan. 2006): 108.

⁵⁸³ There seems to be some wordplay in the parable of the trees as it relates to Judges 9:6. There it says the lords of Shechem made Abimelech king under the oak of the pillar at Shechem. The imagery is rich. The cedars of Lebanon (lords of Shechem), made the bramble (Abimelech) king under the oak tree. In 9:48, Abimelech then stacks a load of wood (tree) against the tower of Shechem and burns it down. Regarding the oak, Butler notes that the Hebrew word, *עֹלֹן*, *ē-lôn*, oak, often appears as Terebinth in translations and notes that in Ezek. 6:13 and Hos. 4:13, people worshipped idols under these trees, Butler, *Judges*, 238. If the lords of Shechem were worshipping idols under the oak, it underscores their rejection of God's rule.

⁵⁸⁴ This assertion does not affect the overall conclusions of the dissertation. The olive tree is still the vehicle in a metaphor, whether one correctly identifies the tenor or not.

narrative does indicate the identity of the fig tree or the vine, and this is probably not necessary for one's purposes.

A similar metaphor where a tree is the vehicle representing a person, a king no less, is in Daniel 4:10-12. There Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a tree at the center of the earth, and its height was great. The text further describes the tree as great and strong, reaching to heaven, and visible to the ends of the earth. A holy watcher (angel) then declares that tree be cut down and its branches chopped off. Later in the narrative when Daniel interprets the dream for the king, he reveals the tenor. Dan. 4:23 records of the tree, "... it is you, O king!" One writes the metaphor as King Nebuchadnezzar is the tree at the center of the earth.

In the case of Judges 9:8-9, the author portrays the olive tree in positive light. The olive tree does not want to abandon its fatness, or richness to rule over the trees. The light is positive in the sense that the produce of the tree is rich. As with Deuteronomy, the production of the olive tree here is valuable.⁵⁸⁵

Waltke and Yu, although not using the term metaphor, interpret this section as a metaphor around the idea of value as well. They equate "valuable trees," with "capable men," calling the olive, the fig, and the vine, valuable.⁵⁸⁶ Interestingly, they also interpret the section of Jotham's curse, where the bramble offers the trees shade, as a metaphor, again without using the term. They call "shade," a reference to protection.⁵⁸⁷

Perhaps most intriguing among the commentators on Judges, is Webb's and Block's identification of Jotham's fable as a lawsuit. Block sees the "function and content" of Jotham's speech as paralleling the function and content of the prophetic lawsuit in Judges 6:7-10.⁵⁸⁸ Webb

⁵⁸⁵ So Waltke and Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, 684.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 315. So too, Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 274.

asserts that Jotham's speech "... is much more a covenant lawsuit than a fable, the fable is just a means to an end."⁵⁸⁹ If one grants Webb's and Block's assertion, Judges 9 would be the first place in the biblical corpus where the olive tree is not only metaphorical, but where the author uses it in a legal context, like that of Rev. 11:3-4.

In another OT context, one again finds a story associating kingship and olive trees. However, the significance of the olive tree in the story seems less amplified than in Judges. In 2 Samuel 15:18LXX,⁵⁹⁰ David is fleeing from his son Absalom's effort at usurping the throne. He orders that all his servants, apart from ten concubines he leaves behind to keep the house, to pack up and flee Jerusalem, to keep it from the "dagger's edge."⁵⁹¹ As the household leaves Jerusalem, it says, "And all his servants were passing close by him, and every Chetti and every Pheletthi, and they stood by the olive tree in the wilderness." The Chetti and Pheletthi may be "professional soldiers," although it is not entirely clear.⁵⁹²

It appears that these soldiers, along with the servants, were standing by "the olive tree in the wilderness." It is an apparently well-known or readily identifiable tree. Given the paucity of commentaries on the LXX, little exploration on the subject exists.⁵⁹³ There is no evidence that the tree stands for anything figurative and is anything more than a landmark.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁸⁹ Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 274. Webb also believes that Jotham's invocation for God to listen in Judges 9:7 is witness language, *ibid.*, 273.

⁵⁹⁰ Most English translations of this passage follow BHS rather than any LXX version.

⁵⁹¹ Bernard Taylor and Paul D. Mclean, "2 Reigns," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 287.

⁵⁹² Arnold A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*. ed. Bruce Metzger, The Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 203.

⁵⁹³ The articular olive tree may be parallel to the end of 2 Sam. 15:17, which says, "they stopped at the far house." Apparently, the people of the day knew the far house and the olive tree in the wilderness as landmarks. Smith notes that the NIV reads "last house," instead of far house and that the NIV uses the Aramaic Targum of 2 Samuel rather than the Hebrew, James E. Smith, *1 & 2 Samuel*. The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2000), 455.

⁵⁹⁴ In the same story in 2 Sam. 15:30, David ascends the "Mount of Olives (NRSV)," or "ascending by the ascent of the olive groves," Taylor and Mclean, "2 Reigns," 287.

Esdras B 18:15,⁵⁹⁵ or Nehemiah 8:15 (NRSV), indicates that the people who had returned to the land of Israel after the exile discovered the command of Moses to celebrate the festival of booths. The passage indicates a belief that one of the materials for these booths should be the branches of olive trees, as well as wild olive trees (NRSV).⁵⁹⁶

Williamson indicates that Neh. 8:15 must draw upon Lev. 23:39-43, for its description of the Feast of Tabernacles, as the Lev. passage shares similar language.⁵⁹⁷ One would note however, that while Nehemiah requires the use of branches of olive trees for these booths, Lev. 23 records no such stipulation.⁵⁹⁸ Unfortunately, as in the 2 Sam.15:18LXX, commentators do not address any significance regarding the specific use of olive tree branches for the construction of the booths.

Psalms 51:10LXX, or Psalm 52:8 NRSV, includes another important figurative use of the olive tree in the OT. The NRSV reads, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God." The LXX reflects a simile as well, recording, ἐγὼ δὲ ὡσεὶ ἐλαία κατάκαρπος ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ θεοῦ. The LXX, rather than comparing the author to a green olive tree, compares him to a fruitful olive tree in the house of God.

The author, if the heading of the Psalm is correct, is David, and Psalm 52 NRSV translates the heading of the Psalm as "A Maskil of David, when Doeg the Edomite came to Saul

⁵⁹⁵ Or 2 Esdras 18:15, as in R. Glenn Wooden, "2 Esdras," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 419.

⁵⁹⁶ Wooden has "foliage of olive trees and foliage of cypress wood," *ibid.*

⁵⁹⁷ Hugh Godfrey Maturin Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*. ed. Bruce Metzger, The Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 293.

⁵⁹⁸ Williamson outlines several interpretive issues that arise in the Nehemiah passage. The heads of the ancestral houses, the priests, Levites, and Ezra, all come together to study the law and the text states that they "found written in the law ... that the people of Israel should live in booths during the festival of the seventh month (Neh. 8:14)." However, as Williamson notes, the decrees that follow this verse, outlining how the people should then practice the festival, have stipulations that one cannot find recorded in the law. He summarizes various reasons for this, which one will not discuss here, *ibid.*, 293-295. Breneman, as Williamson, is aware of the interpretive difficulties of Nehemiah's use of Lev. 23 and Deut. 16 in these verses, but simply states, "No attempt is made here to quote these passages verbatim," Mervin Breneman, *"Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther,"* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 229.

and said to him, ‘David has come to the house of Ahimelech.’” The heading is a reference to the narrative in 1 Sam. 22.

Tournay argues that this effort to tie the Psalm to an event in David’s life, particularly an event from the 1&2 Samuel tradition, serves to portray David as “a prophet at the head of the Levitical singers who too are inspired by the same Spirit.”⁵⁹⁹ He appears to follow Mannati in arguing that the Ps. 52 is one of David’s “prophetic admonishments or indictments of the wicked.”⁶⁰⁰

Tate argues that it is difficult to place the Psalm in any form-critical category. However, he concludes by writing, “The best approach, however, is to read the psalm in terms of the language of prophetic judgment speech to an individual.”⁶⁰¹ In such a reading, Ps. 52 NRSV contrasts the judgment of God upon the wicked with the status of the righteous.

The judgment of the wicked is most poignantly in Ps. 52:5 NRSV, where God, “will break you down forever; he will snatch and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living...” Tate sees this as emphasizing the “...inglorious fall of the wicked,” which the Psalmist contrasts with the “... stability and long-lived fruitfulness of the faithful, who are like olive trees house of God.”⁶⁰²

Although commenting on the Hebrew text, Tate calls the olive tree here a “rich metaphor,”⁶⁰³ and in fact, without using the terminology, attempts something of a brief exploration of the associated common places involved in the metaphor. He notes that the olive was a significant part of the ancient economy and an indicator of the goodness of the land of

⁵⁹⁹ Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms: The Prophetic Liturgy of the Second Temple in Jerusalem*, 44.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 196.

⁶⁰¹ Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*. ed. Bruce Metzger, The Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 35.

⁶⁰² Ibid., 39.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 38.

Palestine. Given that the author of Psalm 52 writes of a fruitful olive, Tate states, “The olive is an evergreen that may bear fruit (usually in alternate years) for centuries.”⁶⁰⁴ He notes that olive trees likely grew on the temple mount, like other temple complexes in the ANE and believes these trees “... were living reminders of God’s invisible, mysterious blessing which was operative in them and in his people.”⁶⁰⁵

Hossfeld and Zenger also call this a metaphor, writing, “The tree metaphor for the life of the righteous is typical of Wisdom (Prov. 11:28, 30, 15:4), is known to the prophets (Jer. 17:7-8), and is at home in the Psalms (Pss. 1:3, [37:35],⁶⁰⁶ 92:13-16).”⁶⁰⁷ That said, none of the examples they provide concern an olive tree. While most of the references to trees related to the righteous are unnamed trees. The exception is Ps. 92:13-16, where the righteous are like a palm tree, and grow like a cedar of Lebanon. Both are similes, not metaphors, and the only similarity they bear to the olive simile in Ps. 52:6 NRSV, is that “They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.”

Hossfeld and Zenger change their language after this, concluding that, “Trees are part of the basic furniture of temple precincts in the ancient Near East and are the symbol of divine blessing and fruitfulness.”⁶⁰⁸ One cannot know their views on the difference between metaphor and symbol, but in the terminology one uses here, the reference cannot be both a metaphor and a

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid. Keel, writing of other Psalms, 80 and 104 specifically, writes that the olive, palm and cedar trees in the temple courts proclaim, “Yahweh’s power of blessing,” Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. trans., Timothy J. Hallett (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 135. Keel further suggests that the tree represents blessing and life through its shade, as one “finds protection from the burning sun,” *ibid.*, 136.

⁶⁰⁶ Brackets are theirs. Keel suggests, “The life offered by God on Zion is manifested in the broad forecourts with their trees...,” Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, 186.

⁶⁰⁷ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100*. trans., Linda M. Maloney, *Hermeneia -- A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 32.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 33.

symbol. What the trees symbolize in the temple courts is one thing, what they mean in a linguistic metaphor is another.

The simile of the olive tree in this text has a specific comparison often lacking in metaphor. In this instance, the olive tree is “fruitful” and “in the house of God,” and even the palm trees and cedar in Ps. 92:13-16 has a specific comparison of “planted in the house of God.”

Dahood’s translation of the passage nuances the comparison in a different way. The focus of his translation becomes trust and love in the comparison. He writes, “I, for my part, like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God, Trust in the love of the eternal and everlasting God.”⁶⁰⁹ By translating the text this way, he indicates that a flourishing olive tree trusts in the love of God. The focus shifts from “being planted,” to trust and love. Somehow, the flourishing of the olive relates to trust and love.⁶¹⁰ Perhaps there is an implication that God is a gardener, cultivating the tree.

The Rev. 11:3-4 metaphor does include, contrary to many other of John’s metaphors, a prepositional phrase that gives more clarity as do the similes one notes here. The phrase, “before the Lord.” However, the metaphor is still vague compared to the simile and requires careful thought.

One agrees that the olive tree is figurative, but disagrees with Tate, Hossfeld, and Zenger that it is part of a metaphor. Even the BHS expresses a simile, using, כְּזֵיתָא, like an olive tree. The

⁶⁰⁹ Mitchell Dahood S.J., *Psalms II: 51-100: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁶¹⁰ Dahood translates this way, arguing that the author uses enjambment throughout Psalm 52. This would make 10a the subject of the verb trust in vs. 10b, *ibid.*, 16. Gaines, following Watson, defines enjambment as “... when a sentence straddles two clauses,” as opposed to most stanzas, which end with “... either an implied comma or period,” Jason M.H. Gaines, “Identifying Poetic Features in Biblical Texts,” in *The Poetic Priestly Source* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 27.

Greek, as one notes above, is also a simile, using ὡσεὶ ἐλαία, “as an olive tree.” Metaphors, as one defines and describes them above, lack the words “like” or “as.”

Regardless, it is a figurative passage and this simile is an important precedent for the figurative use of an olive tree in prophetic fashion. As one will note elsewhere, the olive trees metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4 is amid a prophetic indictment against the wicked who refuse to repent of their idolatry. Ps. 52 or Ps. 51LXX, fits a similar context of indictment, although there is no indication of idolatry.

Moreover, that the Psalmist places the olive tree in the house of God is remarkable. If one accepts Davidic authorship of Ps. 52\51LXX, then the house of God is probably a reference to the tabernacle, which makes the growing of an olive tree there difficult to imagine historically. If authorship is later, it references the temple and Tate’s image of olive trees growing on the temple mount is more plausible.

Rev. 11:3-4 places the olive trees as standing before the Lord of the earth. Greene argues that “before the Lord,” refers to an appearance in the temple because this is where the Lord dwells.⁶¹¹ Again, if the terms “before the Lord,” refer to the temple, and the house of God refers to the temple, then the two figurative passages both place an olive tree in the temple.

Ps. 127:3, or 128:3 in the NRSV, also uses olive trees figuratively, again, as a simile. The NRSV reads, “Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.” Ps. 128:4 seems to conclude the meaning of such comparisons, saying, “Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.”

⁶¹¹ Joseph R. Greene, “The Spirit in the Temple: Bridging the Gap Between Old Testament Absence and New Testament Assumption,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 55, no. 4 (2012): 719. Boccaccini has a small section on worship as memorial “before God,” in Ancient and Middle Judaism, Gabriele Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 231-234.

The LXX reads, οἱ υἱοί σου ὡς νεόφυτα ἐλαιῶν κύκλῳ τῆς τραπέζης σου, your sons are as newly planted olive trees around your table. The use of ὡς again indicates a simile rather than a metaphor. Nonetheless, the comparison still personifies olive trees as the Rev. 11:3-4 metaphor does, and continues the biblical pattern of comparing olive trees, in one or another, to people. This pattern is one of positive portrayal and often seems to indicate blessing.

The Psalm begins with a makarism (Μακάριοι) in verse one, expressing that God blesses those who fear the Lord and follow his ways. Ps. 128:2 also expresses the same makarism, repeating that a person who fears the Lord “shall be blessed.” 128:4 and 128:5 reinforce the idea of blessing in the Psalm by using a synonym for Μακάριοι. Ps. 128:4 uses the verb εὐλογέω, I praise, or, I bless, to indicate that the one who fears the Lord is blessed. Ps. 128:5 writes, “May the Lord bless you from Zion.” The entirety of the Psalm reinforces the idea that, among other things, having children like olive trees around one’s table is a sign of blessing.⁶¹²

Hossfeld and Zenger, quoting Wieppert, indicate that the imagery of newly planted trees around a table is imagery of an old olive stump. The farmer cuts down the tree for lack of production, but leaves the stump, as new shoots will grow up around the base of the tree. The conclusion is that, “... the stump of a tree surrounded by young olive trees was a symbol of eternity, a sign of the endurance of the past in the present and the future.”⁶¹³

Hossfeld and Zenger believe the author compares a man’s wife to a fruitful vine for reproductive reasons, and the second line then describes the father as an olive tree, since the shoots will come up around his table.⁶¹⁴ One could imply the father is an olive tree and the

⁶¹² The olive tree and blessing are also in Hag. 2:17, where God reveals that the olive trees in Israel began producing again after Israel rebuilt the temple as a sign of his blessing.

⁶¹³ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101-150*. trans., Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia -- A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 401.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 403.

children are like fresh shoots around him.⁶¹⁵ In keeping with other olive tree comparisons, people are in view here and the portrayal is quite positive.⁶¹⁶

This trend of the positive, figurative use of the olive tree continues in the prophetic material, with Hosea 14:6 NRSV, 14:7 LXX, writing that Israel's beauty "... shall be like the olive tree." In promising to heal Israel's wayward behavior and exile, God promises a return for Israel, comparing her restoration to the beauty of an olive tree. Again, the text uses ὡς, for "like," or "as," and is a clear indicator of a simile. However, the figure of the olive relates to people, or a people group, and the author's portrayal is positive.

Stuart sees a triplet in Hosea 14:6. The full text reads, "... his (Israel's) shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like that of Lebanon." The triplet then, according to Stuart, refers to "... stability (his shoots), visibility (his splendor), and desirability (his scent)."⁶¹⁷ In Stuart's scenario, the olive tree simile refers to the visibility of Israel's restoration.

Garrett also refers to the splendor of the olive tree here, believing it "...implies wealth and well-being," primarily because of the olives and expensive olive oil it produces.⁶¹⁸ Shank writes that, "The beauty of the olive tree is not in its appearance, but in its persistent growth and useful fruit."⁶¹⁹ While one is not inclined to believe the simile primarily references the expense

⁶¹⁵ Curiously, Dahood says nothing of the trees, ignoring the comparison entirely, Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III: 101-150: Introduction, Translation, and Notes with an Appendix: The Grammar of the Psalter*. The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 17A (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 228-229.

⁶¹⁶ Although one will not address Sirach in detail, 24:14 writes of personified wisdom, growing "tall like a palm tree in En-Gedi ... like a fair olive tree in the field." It is another positive portrayal of the olive tree in a simile. Sirach 50:10 compares Simon son of Onias to an olive tree in a simile, writing that he is "... like an olive tree laden with fruit (NRSV)."

⁶¹⁷ Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 216.

⁶¹⁸ Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 274.

⁶¹⁹ Harold Shank, *Minor Prophets*. The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 2001), 141.

of the oil of the olive tree, or necessarily wealth, the author of Hosea certainly implies well-being.⁶²⁰

The prophetic use of the olive tree is also in Isaiah 17:6. During an oracle against Damascus, God prophesies through Isaiah that He will destroy Israel, although a small number of Israelites shall remain in the land. God compares these few remaining Israelites to the gleanings of the olive tree, “Gleanings will be left in it, as when an olive tree is beaten – two or three berries in the top of the highest bough ...”⁶²¹

The metaphorical value of the olive tree in this case focuses on the gleanings, rather than just the tree, but still demonstrates a propensity to use the olive tree in a figurative fashion, in this case, a bleak portrayal of Israel’s remnant.⁶²² Nonetheless, the author continues a pattern of relating people to the olive tree. In this case, the paltry, remaining olives on the tree are people, and the tree itself is the land of Israel.

Isaiah 24:13 also uses the gleanings of the olive tree as a negative figure. In a scene of complete judgment and devastation, God promises to lay waste to the earth, “... as when an olive tree is beaten...” The LXX does not use the word “as,” marking a simile, as does the NRSV. It reads “in the same way/manner,” in which one beats an olive tree. This is a verbal metaphor, where the focus is beats/beaten, and the olive tree is a part of the frame.⁶²³

As with Hosea, Jeremiah uses the olive tree to refer to God’s people, but in Jeremiah’s case it specifically refers to Judah, whereas Hosea referred to Israel. In Jer. 11:16 NRSV, Jeremiah prophesies concerning Judah, “The Lord once called you ‘A green olive, fair with

⁶²⁰ Hab. 3:17 demonstrates this negatively. There the author indicates that the failure of the olive tree to produce fruit indicates hardship and suffering.

⁶²¹ So Smith, Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 344.

⁶²² Watts calls this section in Isaiah parabolic, concluding, “The implication is that some will survive and be sustained, if only the very poor,” Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 237.

⁶²³ Smith ties Isa. 24:13 to Isa. 17:6, believing the olive tree references are essentially the same, Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 419.

goodly fruit;’ but with the roar of a great tempest he will set fire to it, and its branches will be consumed.”⁶²⁴ If one were to rewrite this as a surface metaphor, it would read, Judah is a green olive, fair with goodly fruit.⁶²⁵

The LXX rendering of the verse is different, and the New English Translation of the Septuagint captures this well, “The Lord called your name a beautiful olive tree, well shaded in appearance...”⁶²⁶ God will destroy this beautiful olive tree in judgment and Jeremiah’s reference serves to indicate the harsh reality of impending doom. The coming invaders will set fire to the tree.

The figurative portrayal of Judah as an olive tree reinforces the propensity of the OT to use the olive tree for people. Its use in such contexts generally assumes that the olive tree is a sign of blessing, and has positive connotations, such as beauty and stability. When the olive appears in judgment contexts, God removes the blessing of the olive tree through destruction, both figuratively and literally.

A summary of olive trees further reveals that olive trees in the OT have both literal and figurative roles, including symbolic and metaphorical value. When they do appear in figurative texts, as either symbols or metaphors, they tend to represent people, and have connotations of God’s blessings, as well as beauty. In literal contexts, they represent God’s provision of food, stability, and an economic commodity, as well as God’s judgment in times of crisis.

The olive tree never appears in a near co-text with the word “witness,” or its forms, and the only place it appears in the near co-text of lampstands is Zech. 4, which one deals with elsewhere. Since the OT does not use any metaphors regarding the olive tree and witness, and the

⁶²⁴ Jer. 11:17 continues that it was the Lord who planted the tree.

⁶²⁵ Huey calls the olive tree a “... symbol of fruitfulness, beauty, and usefulness,” and links it to Hosea 14:6 as well Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, 135.

⁶²⁶ Pietersma and Saunders, “Jeremias,” 892.

NT similarly omits such a reference, one concludes that John introduces his reader to a novel metaphor, forcing ancient and modern readers to make critical assertions regarding the association of witnesses, olive trees, and lampstands.

Since there is some overlap in the use of olive trees, olive oil, and the metaphorical use of trees in general, one includes a brief examination of certain of these references as well. These select notes may provide some insight into the associated common places of John's metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4 as well.

Olive oil plays a critical role in the cultic activities of the tabernacle and temple. In Exod. 30:24, the Hebrew uses both the words for olive, **תַּיִת**, and for oil, **שֶׁמֶן**, to emphasize which kind of oil the Israelites should use for their tabernacle ritual. The text there indicates that Israel was to make a sacred anointing oil, blended by a perfumer, containing myrrh, sweet-smelling cinnamon, aromatic cane, cassia, and a hin of olive oil. Moses was to use this perfume to anoint the tent of meeting, Ark of the Covenant, the table and its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offerings, and the basin and its stand.⁶²⁷

Moses was also to anoint Aaron and his sons in order that they serve as priests, and then declare, "This shall be my anointing oil throughout your generations." God commanded Israel to cut off from the people anyone who attempted to compound this sacred oil or use it for mundane purposes.

Lev. 24:2 also uses a combination of the words for olive, **תַּיִת**, and oil, **שֶׁמֶן**, where oil is in the grammatical position of construct with the absolute oil. The text has two additional absolute

⁶²⁷ The description of this perfume is, in part, what causes Brun to declare, "The Hebrews were great producers and users of olive oil-based perfumes as early as the 14th century B.C.," Jean-Pierre Brun, "The Production of Perfumes in Antiquity: The Cases of Delos and Paestum," *American Journal of Archaeology* 104, no. 2 (April 2000): 279.

nouns that in are in construct with oil as the sentence indicates the oil is olive, that it is pure, זַיִת, zāḵ, and it is beaten, כְּתִית, kā·tīt'. This passage is of interest in that it has a form of olive and lamp in the same co-text, as does Rev. 11:4 where the “witnesses” metaphor exists. The priests are to place the lamps upon the lampstand of pure gold. The olive oil for the lamp is pure, and the whole image evokes cultic, ritual activity in the tabernacle.

A curious word play exists in Lev. 24:2 and Lev. 24:4 using the word pure. The olive oil is pure, זַיִת, and the lampstand is pure, טָהוֹר, ṭā·hōr'. BDB indicates that the latter refers to ceremonial purity and cleanliness,⁶²⁸ whereas the former is “unmixed, free from foreign substance.”⁶²⁹

Given that, as Richter notes above, it takes so long to grow the olive tree, having olive trees was a sign or symbol of peace, security, and prosperity.⁶³⁰ God’s warning of wartime judgment for disobedience is significant in this regard. For instance, in Jeremiah 6:6, God declares that Israel’s enemies should cut down the trees around Jerusalem and build siege ramps. Isaiah 9:10 indicates that Israel’s enemies felled their fig trees. The cutting down of trees could devastate a region’s economy and ability to survive. The loss of trees threatens peace, security, and prosperity, and is a sign judgment.⁶³¹

On another level, the OT associates humans and trees at metaphoric levels, imaging great trees as great kingdoms, such as the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4. In an image of

⁶²⁸ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, eds., *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 372.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 269.

⁶³⁰ Richter, “Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology of Creation Care,” 366. Wright also notes that farmers need significant time to tend olive groves and other crops, and that in times of extended conflict, that agriculture suffers from lack of husbandry as much as destruction. He concludes by saying one could win the battle, but lose the war, in that economic depression could follow the neglect of crops and trees, Jacob L. Wright, “Warfare and Wanton Destruction: A Reexamination of Deuteronomy 20:19-20 in Relation to Ancient Siegecraft,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 428.

⁶³¹ Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman III, Duriez, Penney, and Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 890-891.

judgment, Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is a great, fruit bearing tree, and a messenger from heaven calls for someone to cut down the tree, trim its branches, strip its leaves, and scatter its fruit.⁶³²

Richter and Smoak note that this was a common tactic of the Assyrians. They write the Assyrians would cut down fruit trees, including olive trees, as part of their wartime strategies "to cripple that city for decades beyond the actual assault."⁶³³

Smoak further notes that Assyrians cut down the fruit trees not because they needed the wood for the siege, as some have supposed, but as a sign of subjection and victory. He asserts this based on relief inscriptions of the Assyrians, which depict the cutting down of trees as taking place simultaneously with the deportation of the population and the final burning of the city.⁶³⁴ One also finds this practice reflected in the discussion above when the Persians sacked Athens and cut down the sacred olive grove of Athena.

From an OT perspective, God prohibits the cutting down of such fruit trees by Israel in Deut. 20:19-20, since these trees could provide food for Israel after the victory. However, Israel could cut down non-fruit bearing trees and use them for siege material.⁶³⁵ Hasel notes that this command is not universal, but applies only to protracted sieges, in which Israel would need food, and in which Israel would need to build siege works. Moreover, he convincingly argues this command only applies to those cities in the land of Canaan that Israel is to dispossess. He compares the command of Deuteronomy to Elijah's prophecy in 2 Kgs. 3:4-27, where God

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Richter, "Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology of Creation Care." For Richter's source, see Jeremy D. Smoak, "Building Houses and Planting Vineyards: The Early Inner-Biblical Discourse on an Ancient Israelite Wartime Curse," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 21-22.

⁶³⁴ Smoak, "Building Houses and Planting Vineyards: The Early Inner-Biblical Discourse on an Ancient Israelite Wartime Curse," 21-23.

⁶³⁵ Richter notes this passage in, Richter, "Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology of Creation Care," 365.

commands Israel to cut down “every good tree,” in its attack on Moab. The affirmation of cutting down trees is because God does not command Israel to possess Moab.⁶³⁶

Since the olive tree is a fruit tree, the judgment of God in felling his olive trees of Israel and Judah, as one notes above, is terrible indeed. The cutting down of trees as an act of judgment extends to the NT as well. For instance, in Matt. 3:10, John the Baptist declares that the ax is already at the root of the tree.

Non-biblical and extra-biblical literature near the time of the writing of the book of Revelation confirm the importance of olive trees, olives, and olive oil in the Jewish tradition. A few examples here will suffice to demonstrate this.

Josephus records that the special “sweet ointment” with which Moses purified the priests, contained “a hin of oil of olives.”⁶³⁷ In another recounting of the laws of the Jews from antiquity, Josephus records that they were to leave some of the fruit of the olive trees for the poor.⁶³⁸

Josephus also recounts Judges 9:7-15, the parable of the trees that Jothan (NRSV has Jotham) tells to the lords of Shechem while he is standing on Mount Gerizim. In the parable, the people of Shechem are trees seeking a ruler. The fig, vine, and olive tree all decline, leaving the bramble to rule over the people.⁶³⁹

3.7.4 Olive Trees in the New Testament

As with the Old Testament study above, there are historical, biblical, and non-biblical literary sources concerning the use of the olive tree in and around the NT era. Before moving to

⁶³⁶ Michael G. Hasel, “The Destruction of Trees in the Moabite Campaign of 2 Kings 3:4-27: A Study in the Laws of Warfare,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 201-205.

⁶³⁷ Josephus, “The Antiquities of the Jews,” 3.197. Josephus also indicates the hin is a measurement unique to the Jews.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.231.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.237.

an examination of NT texts, one offers a few examples of the importance of olive trees in the NT milieu.

Jeremias, quoting Eupolemos and Pseudo Aristeeas 112, writes that olive trees “took pride of place among the crops in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.”⁶⁴⁰ He believes that the location of the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem demonstrates the truthfulness of this statement, and adds that name Gethsemane, the garden outside of Jerusalem, means oil or perfume press.⁶⁴¹

One of the most popular references to olives in the NT is the Mount of Olives. While the history of this mountain is significant, the planting of olives there may simply be due to the economic value. Rodríguez, quoting Pliny, argues that, “olives planted in pebbly soils” yielded “better fruit,” and “those on hillsides better still.”⁶⁴²

Olive trees, as one notes above, were common in Galilee, and Evans further notes that there is evidence of olive presses and oil manufacture during the first-century A.D. in the region as well.⁶⁴³

The uses of olive oil in the first century are probably like those uses that one outlines above. However, Evans, in his work on Jewish burial traditions, may shed insight into a previously overlooked use of the olive tree and its products. In describing the crucifixion of Yehohanan in the 20's A.D., he notes that those who buried him were unable to remove the spike from his right heel. Attached to the spike was a piece of olive wood, which those who attended the bones later placed in an ossuary, still attached to the heel.⁶⁴⁴ While Evans does not comment

⁶⁴⁰ Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 6-7.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁴² José Remesal Rodríguez, "Baetica Olive Oil and the Roman Economy," in *The Archaeology of Early Roman Baetica*, ed. Simon Keay, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series (Portsmouth, Rhode Island: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1998), 183.

⁶⁴³ Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 13.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., 123.

on whether olive wood was common material for crosses in Palestine, it is an interesting notation nonetheless.

Although she does not give exact dates, Hachlili indicates that olives and olive trees played an important role in the art and architecture of Second Temple period, reflecting their importance to the region during the general time of the New Testament era. At a northern palace in Masada, one floor mosaic contains “vegetation motifs,” with “... fig leaves with a frame of stylized olive branches.”⁶⁴⁵ Similar vegetation motifs adorned the houses of the Jerusalem Upper City, and “Olive leaves decorate a stone table and pottery bowls from Jerusalem.”⁶⁴⁶

Within the pages of the NT, the Mount of Olives undoubtedly plays an important historical and literary role, with Jesus making regular journeys to the Mount of Olives.⁶⁴⁷ What most English translations call olives, could also be olive trees. Of the fifteen references in the NT to olive trees, eleven refer to the Mount of Olives, all of which are in the Gospels.⁶⁴⁸ While the Mount of Olives is historically significant and worthy of attention, the references to it in the gospels have no bearing on the literary references and associated common places for the study of metaphor here.

The two final NT references that may bear some significance on the NT use of olive trees are Romans 11:17 and 11:24, appearing within the same co-text. There, Paul describes the relationship of the Gentiles to the Jews, writing in 11:17-18, “But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches.”

⁶⁴⁵ Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, 66.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶⁴⁷ Magness states that the Mount of Olives was a necropolis in Jerusalem’s early days, Jodi Magness, “The Topography and Early History of Jerusalem (to 586 B.C.E.),” in *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon’s Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 22.

⁶⁴⁸ Matt. 21:1, Matt. 24:3, Matt. 26:30, Mark 11:1, Mark 13:3, Mark 14:26, Luke 19:29, Luke 19:37, Luke 21:37, Luke 22:39, and John 8:1.

Farther on in his exhortation to the Gentiles, he continues in 11:24, “For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will the natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.”

Many interpreters of Paul agree that his use of the olive tree here in Romans is metaphorical.⁶⁴⁹ The reference, according to Dunn, is “... due only partly to the fact that Israel had occasionally been likened to one ... Equally important would have been the fact that the olive tree was the most widely cultivated fruit tree in the Mediterranean area.”⁶⁵⁰

Dunn believes that Paul’s calling them a wild olive and Israel a cultivated olive, turns the Gentiles’ pride back on them, because the wild olive “was notoriously unproductive,” and a “cultured olive would clearly imply the superiority of the Jewish spiritual heritage as over against the non-Jewish.”⁶⁵¹

Cottrell understands the passage as metaphorical, and points to Jer. 11:16 and Hos. 14:6 as the basis for Paul’s use of the olive tree as Israel.⁶⁵² In his metaphorical processes, he identifies “... the root with OT Israel as a national unit, and I identify the branches as (in part) including (some) individual Jews who live in this NT era.”⁶⁵³ He goes on to include one of the lengthier descriptions among commentators of the meaning of the metaphor from a theological standpoint.

⁶⁴⁹ E.g. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*. ed. Bruce Metzger, The Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 660. who calls it an extended metaphor. So too, Newman and Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 219; William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), 371; Svetlana Khobnya, "The Root' in Paul's Olive Tree Metaphor (Romans 11:16-24)," *Tyndale Bulletin* 64, no. 2 (2013): 258. C.f. Schreiner and Morris who call Paul’s olive tree reference an illustration, Schreiner, *Romans*, 603; Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 412.

⁶⁵⁰ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 661.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid.

⁶⁵² Jack Cottrell, *Romans*. 2 vols., The College Press NIV Commentary, vol. 2 (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 1996), Rom. 11:17.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

Schreiner believes the branches that “have been cut off are ethnic Israel,” due to 11:21 and 11:24. In his view, “... not all Jews have been severed from the olive tree. Only those who disbelieved ...” The Gentiles are the wild olive tree and the Jews are the cultivated olive tree.⁶⁵⁴

Although Schreiner does not use the term metaphor, his description of the passage bears the markings of metaphor, and his understanding of the constituent parts of the metaphor is like that of Dunn and others.

Paul’s theological assertions in using the olive tree metaphor in Romans do not affect the interpretation of Rev. 11:3-4. What does affect one’s processing of the metaphor is the fact that Paul, like so many of the OT uses of the olive tree, compares Israel and the Gentiles, in other words, people, to the parts of the olive tree. As John does this as well, there is a continuing pattern from the OT to the NT in using the olive tree as a vehicle in metaphors where people of some sort are the tenors, or in simile’s where specific characteristics, states of being, or behaviors of people compare with specific characteristics, etc. of the olive tree.

Furthermore, the verbal metaphor, which many commentators overlook, regarding cutting off the branches, is an image of judgment, which also compares to OT passages where judgment oracles include figurative uses of the olive tree.

3.8 Overview of “*Standing Before the Lord*”

As one has already outlined the history and potential uses of lampstands for the associated common places of “the seven churches are the seven lampstands” metaphor in Rev. 1, it is not necessary to trace these again. One will use that previous section in drawing conclusions concerning this new metaphor.

⁶⁵⁴ Schreiner, *Romans*, 604.

However, to the metaphor of “the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands,” John adds a phrase that may be instructive in determining the meaning of the metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4. He informs the reader that these olive trees and lampstands are αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἐστῶτες, the ones standing before the Lord of the earth. It is a reference to Zechariah 4:14 where the two olive trees are the ones who stand by the Lord of the earth.

αἱ is an article denoting previous reference, as it is the article that modifies the number “two,” which comes before both substantives “olive trees,” and “lampstands.” It appears at the beginning of the sentence to ensure that the reader understands the attributive construction to follow further describes the olive trees and lampstands.

The article also likely appears early in the phrase so as not to confuse the reader when the participle ἐστῶτες, having stood, appears. The article is feminine in gender, whereas the participle is masculine. The participle is attributive in function and modifies the pronoun οὗτοί, these, which is masculine and refers to the witnesses. John says, “These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands, the ones having stood before the Lord of the earth.” However, a severe rendering would be, “the ones before the Lord of the earth having stood.”

As the participle for standing is perfect tense, one believes it is an intensive perfect, emphasizing a present state, thus the translation, the ones standing.⁶⁵⁵ To say these witnesses have already stood in the presence of the Lord, when they are on presently on the earth in the Rev. 11 narrative and are later assumed into heaven after their murder, creates several logical problems in the narrative.

⁶⁵⁵ See Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 574-576.

One identified this phrase very early on in this dissertation as an example of an attributive metaphor construction using a participle. Since the two witnesses are on earth, and since they are part of a metaphorical construction already, these are likely primes for the reader to understand that the witnesses are not literally standing before the Lord, as in the temple, or the heavenly throne, but rather there is something figurative in the phrase. A look at elements of this phrase below aids in interpreting the metaphor.

The UBS 5 phrase in Rev. 11:4 ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου, before the Lord, occurs in this exact form only in Job 1:6 and Job 2:2 in the LXX. Job 1:6 NRSV reads, “One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.” Job 2:1-2 has the same Greek phrase and is nearly identical in recording, “One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.”⁶⁵⁶

In both cases, the appearance is heavenly and God is “...being pictured as a king surrounded by his courtiers ...”⁶⁵⁷ Although there is no reference to witness as in Rev. 11:3-4, the most significant aspect of these texts for this work is that the angels and Satan, were in heaven, in the presence of the Lord. Although the two witnesses in Revelation are on earth, there appears to be some effort to place them, if metaphorically, in the very presence of the Lord.

The phrase before the Lord, in similar but not exact forms to that in Rev., appears approximately 275 times in the OT. One cannot explore all those references here, but one will

⁶⁵⁶ Cox’s translation of Job 2:1 LXX is not substantially different, contain the phrase “came to present themselves before the Lord,” Claude E. Cox, “Job,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 671.

⁶⁵⁷ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 18.

offer a summary of these passages, as well as focus in on those references that include the idea of “standing before the Lord,” since this is the specific wording of the Rev. 11:3-4 metaphor.

In many LXX occurrences, the phrase “before the Lord,” carries the sense of being in the presence of the Lord, and this in the tabernacle or the temple, or before the priest, who conducting the cult of the tabernacle or temple. There are occasions when the phrase may mean something came to the Lord’s attention. The phrase often refers to judgment.

In Genesis 19:13NRSV, for instance, the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah “...has become great before the Lord.” It seems that not only has the outcry reached God’s ears, but that because it has reached his ears, God will destroy both cities. It is in the context of judgment.

In Exod. 16:13, Moses was to place an omer of manna in a jar before the Lord, “to be kept throughout your generations.” In later times, Stuart believes this is a reference to the Ark of the Covenant, which is inside the Holy of Holies.⁶⁵⁸ Since the Israelites had yet to construct the tabernacle, Stuart also asserts the command was “... a way of saying that it was to remain in God’s presence ...”⁶⁵⁹

Exodus 23:17 records God commanding Israel, “Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord.” Again, since during this time the tabernacle does not exist in the history of Israel, Durham summarizes this exhortation by saying they must appear, “... in a place set aside for the worship of Yahweh...”⁶⁶⁰ It too is probably a way of saying to appear in God’s presence.

In a potentially important reference for the Rev. 11:3-4 metaphor, Exod. 27:20-21 commands the Israelites to bring pure oil of beaten olives for the lamp that was before the Lord,

⁶⁵⁸ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 384.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ Durham, *Exodus*, 333.

in front of the covenant, where Aaron and his sons were to tend to it.⁶⁶¹ Again, it is likely this was for the tent of meeting, which Stuart calls a “pretabernacle,” and highly plausible this command anticipates the future cultic practices of the tabernacle.⁶⁶²

Exod. 28:12 has Aaron bearing an ephod on his shoulders. The ephod has two stones upon which he was (or someone) was to engrave the names of the twelve sons of Israel. In this way, Aaron bore them as a way of remembrance when in Yahweh’s presence.⁶⁶³ Similarly, Exod. 28:24-25 has golden bells on the hem of Aaron’s garments so that when he goes before the Lord in the holy place, people can hear their sound and he will not die. These examples are a few of dozens of references in Exodus and Leviticus that indicate the phrase before the Lord refers to the Lord’s presence in the tabernacle and the various cult practices, including sacrifices and atonement offerings, that the priests made in the tabernacle.

For one’s purposes, the more specific idea of standing before the Lord merits scrutiny as this phrase modifies the metaphor in Re. 11:3-4. Also, since John uses the idea of witnesses, and one has shown that witnesses appear in legal contexts, one explores “before the Lord” in legal contexts as well.

An early example is Exod. 22:11 where a person delivers a donkey, ox, sheep, or other animal to another person for safekeeping. The animal then dies or someone carries it off, and there are no witnesses. The text says, “... an oath before the Lord shall decide between the two of them that the one has not laid hands on the property of the other...”

⁶⁶¹ Stuart believes the continually burning lamp symbolizes that God does not sleep and extinguish his lamp at bedtime according the practice of ancient people, Stuart, *Exodus*, 600.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 601.

⁶⁶³ So Durham, *Exodus*, 386.

Stuart believes the difficulty in the legal situation of Exod. 22 is that both parties swear innocence and thus the judges had to place the matter in God's hands.⁶⁶⁴ Durham essentially states something similar, but in negative fashion, they both could be lying.⁶⁶⁵ By leaving the matter to God, Yahweh serves as witness.⁶⁶⁶

Although Num. 16:16ff does not have the word stand, it is in the context of God judging between two groups. There, Moses, Korah, and all those who rebelled with Korah against Moses present themselves before the Lord for judgment. God will demonstrate to the people whom he has chosen to lead. The ground opens and swallows Korah and his followers and their families, indicating God's judgment of Korah and his choosing of Moses.

Num. 27:5 has Moses bringing the case of the daughters of Zelophehad before the Lord. Their father had died in the wilderness for his sin leaving no sons. They wished to have their father's inheritance so Moses take the case before the Lord, who rules in favor of the daughter.

Another scenario that has the words "before the Lord," which may aid in the interpretation of the two-witnesses metaphor is Deut. 19:17. Although it does not have the word "stand," it is one of the rare contexts in which the words "two witnesses" and "before the Lord" occur. One discusses the passage thoroughly under the section regarding witnesses in the Old Testament, but to summarize here, in the situation where a false witness accuses someone of wrongdoing, presumably without two or three witnesses, the false witness and the accused are to appear before the Lord, who will judge between them. Perhaps, like other passages here, Yahweh serves as both witness and judge in the case where multiple witnesses are absent.

⁶⁶⁴ Stuart, *Exodus*, 507.

⁶⁶⁵ Durham, *Exodus*, 326.

⁶⁶⁶ So *ibid*.

Other situations, legal and non-legal, use forms of the words “stand” and “before the Lord.”⁶⁶⁷ The first of which is Num. 5:11-31. The casuistic situation there has the story of an unfaithful wife who hides her infidelity from her husband and there is no witness. The situation in Num. 5 is like that of Exod. 22 in that there is no witness in both instances.

If the woman’s husband suspects her, he brings her to the priest, who will “... set her before the Lord (Num. 5:16NRSV).” The LXX has the priest standing her before the Lord, *στήσει αὐτὴν ἔναντι κυρίου*. The text repeats the exact words again in 5:18 to emphasize that the woman is standing before the Lord.⁶⁶⁸ The woman takes an oath, drinks bitter water, and if she is innocent, nothing happens, but if she is guilty, God curses her and her uterus drops and her womb discharges.

Since Lev. 20:10 declares that both parties in an adulterous relationship must die, one assumes here that the lack of witnesses and the absence of any mention of the offending man, make this a different type of legal situation.⁶⁶⁹ For one, even if the woman is guilty, she will live, but it will not be a “blessed” existence because of the curse. As with the Exodus passage above, Cole notes that this woman is in the hands of God.⁶⁷⁰

Num. 27:19-21 has both “stand” and “before the Lord,” as well. The occurrence is not exact, but the words occur in near proximity. There, God instructs Moses to have Joshua stand before Eleazar the priest, and Eleazar shall inquire before the Lord using the Urim, concerning Joshua becoming the leader of Israel after Moses.

⁶⁶⁷ Judg. 20:26 describes the rare situation of the Israelites sitting before the Lord. David sits before the Lord in 2 Sam. 7:18. 2 Sam. 6:5, 14, 16, 17 has David and all the house of Israel dancing before the Lord (Ark of the Covenant).

⁶⁶⁸ The same phrase occurs again in Num. 5:30, this time in the case of a husband’s jealousy.

⁶⁶⁹ Budd argues that since death is the normal outcome of adultery, two witnesses are necessary for conviction Budd, *Numbers*, 64.

⁶⁷⁰ R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 118.

Deut. 4:10 also has a form of “stand” and “before the Lord.” Moses tells the people to remember how they once stood before the Lord at Horeb and listened to the Lord’s words, and pledged to fear the Lord.⁶⁷¹ Although not exactly legal in the sense of the other texts, it is covenantal. The passage may connect with Deut. 6:23-25, which does describe the keeping of the Lord’s statutes and the observance of the entire commandment before the Lord.

Deut. 10:8 describes the three functions of the tribe of Levi. They are to carry the Ark of the Covenant, to stand before the Lord to minister to him, and to bless his name.⁶⁷² Christensen sees these three functions as ways in which the Levites instructed the people “... in the meaning of the Ten Commandments in daily life ...”⁶⁷³ Merrill believes these three actions serve “... to highlight all the more their allegiance to the Lord in the matter of the golden calf.”⁶⁷⁴

The words “stand,” “witness,” and “before the Lord,” all occur in the co-text of 1 Samuel 12:3ff. It has Samuel preparing to transition from his role as the leader of the people after he anoints Saul as king. He calls the people to testify before the Lord as to whether he has taken anything from them, and then calls the Lord as witness and his anointed as witness, that he has taken nothing. In 12:7, Samuel declares, “Now therefore take your stand, so that I may enter into judgment with you before the Lord, and I will declare to you all the saving deeds of the Lord that he performed for you and your ancestors.” It is a scene describing God as witness and has him judging between Samuel and the people because of their wickedness in asking God for a king.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷¹ Deut. 29:10 has the people, which the text describes in seven groups of an implicit heptad, standing before the Lord to make a covenant with him. Deut. 29:14 repeats similar words, as Moses swears by oath on behalf of those standing before the Lord, and those who are not with them there, to enter a covenant with God.

⁶⁷² Deut. 18:7 reinforces the wording of a Levite standing to minister before the Lord when it gives instructions for how to handle a transient Levite who moves from his town.

⁶⁷³ Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-21:9*, 196.

⁶⁷⁴ Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 200.

⁶⁷⁵ Klein describes these events as a “... legal process between Samuel and the people,” with the people serving as accusers, Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*. ed. Bruce Metzger, The Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 113.

In 1 Kgs. 19:11, God tells Elijah to go to Horeb and “... stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”⁶⁷⁶ The passage undoubtedly recalls Moses on Horeb from Exod. 33:18-22.⁶⁷⁷ There, Moses is on the mountain and cannot see God. However, Moses stands on “the rock” and God places Moses in the cleft of the rock as Lord’s glory passes by him. In addition to recalling Moses, it also recalls the people who stood before the Lord by the mountain to make a covenant with him.

In a passage like that of Job 1:6 and Job 2:1LXX (2:2 NRSV), 1 Kgs. 22:19 has the Lord sitting on his heavenly throne with the heavenly host standing on his right and left. God asks if someone will go and entice Ahab. 1 Kgs. 22:21 says, “... a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord,” and agreed to be a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab’s prophets.

In the co-text, there is a struggle between the prophets of Ahab who tell him what he wants to hear, and Micaiah, who speaks only the truth on behalf of God. There is drama in the passage as it portrays God’s throne, as opposed to the throne of Ahab, and seems to show God’s heavenly retinue as greater than Ahab’s.⁶⁷⁸ The heavenly king has allowed a lying spirit to enter Ahab’s prophets and they mislead him. Thus, the scene before God may be one of true versus false prophecy.⁶⁷⁹ Regardless, God sits in judgment on Ahab who later dies as God predicts.

⁶⁷⁶ It may be that this specifically refers to the entrance of a cave on Horeb. 1 Kgs. 19:13 says Elijah wrapped his face and stood at the entrance to a cave when God passed by.

⁶⁷⁷ So too Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*. The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 223; DeVries, *1 Kings*, 236.

⁶⁷⁸ 1 Kgs. 22:10 has King Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahab of Israel “... sitting on their thrones and arrayed in their robes ... and all the prophets were prophesying before them.” Meanwhile God sits on his throne in heaven with the heavenly host around him in 1 Kgs. 22:19. Furthermore, while all the prophets around the earthly kings are saying the same thing (1 Kgs. 22:12-13), the heavenly host first says one thing, then another (1 Kgs. 22:20). There may be some prophetic implication concerning situations when everyone says the same thing, as in, it could be false prophecy. So too DeVries, who outlines a view of a “... clash, between earth’s court and heaven’s court,” DeVries, *1 Kings*, 266. The Micaiah passage, where he stands alone against the false prophets of Ahab, also parallels Elijah’s previous struggles with the prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel in 1 Kgs. 18.

⁶⁷⁹ House discusses this possibility, House, *1, 2 Kings*, 237.

While the word for standing in the Bible often refers to the common idea of people or things standing, standing before the Lord occurs only in specific contexts. One here will examine the linguistic comparisons between Rev. 11:4 and the biblical corpus regarding standing before the Lord.⁶⁸⁰ One will also look at passages that express the concept of someone standing before the Lord, but which might also diverge somewhat in linguistic expression.

3.8.1 Conclusion to the Lampstands and Olive Trees as “Standing Before the Lord”

When one compares all the potential contexts of witnesses, olive trees, lampstands, for associated common places, it seems that John has intentionally defined the common place for his metaphors of the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands. To his metaphors, John adds the description, “that stand before the Lord of the earth.” The idea of standing appears to help shape the point of the metaphor. Witnesses stand, olive trees stand, lampstands stand, and all do it in the presence of the Lord.

These are not just any witnesses; they are those standing before the Lord. These are not just any olive trees; they are those standing before the Lord. These are not just any lampstands; they are those standing before the Lord.

The incongruity of ideas makes it clear these are metaphors. Witnesses are not olive trees nor lampstands. Olive trees and lampstands do not stand, in the same way people do, likely indicating that standing is a verbal metaphor.

The idea that all are before the Lord is a reference to the Lord’s temple or throne in heaven. The lampstand in the OT is in the holy of holies, outside the curtain, in front of the Ark

⁶⁸⁰ One believes the image of standing before the Lord derives directly from linguistic connections in the OT, contrary to Bauckham, who believes that the two witness standing before the Lord symbolizes, “... their universal witness to God’s or Christ’s lordship of the world,” Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*, 165.

of the Covenant. The olive trees are likely a reference to the outer court of the temple mount, where the Israelites have planted trees. References from the Psalms, as one previously notes, likely indicate the house of the Lord had palm trees, cedars, and olive trees all planted in the outer courts of the temple. Their location in the temple courts could make them “before the Lord.” They represent that being in any part of the temple is to stand before the Lord.

These compared associations dissuade one from certain of other contexts, such as olive trees representing peace or prosperity. It is difficult to see the olive trees are representing peace and prosperity in John’s context, as they do in so many places in the OT, since these olive trees in Rev. 11:3-4 die.

Considering the overview of potential associated common places above, rooted in the various cultures of John’s day, there is certainly the sense that, given the nature of the two witnesses, they are serving the juridical purpose of rightly testifying for or against someone or something, which one discusses later.

Given the potential multivalence of the metaphor, one cannot also help but wonder if there is any sense in this metaphor of foreshadow by calling them olive trees and lampstands. In many of the contexts that one searched, one’s enemies destroyed olive trees in an act of war and carried off temple treasures, such as lampstands, as part of the booty.

If one carries the metaphor out a little bit, could it be that the text images the cutting down of the olive trees as an act of the beasts’ war, a typical warfare strategy?⁶⁸¹ The USB 5 of the Greek text indicates that the beast “will conquer them,” the future active indicative form of *νικάω*. The word does not appear often in biblical and extra biblical contexts, but in many of

⁶⁸¹ Refer back to Smoak, whom one previously mentions, Smoak, "Building Houses and Planting Vineyards: The Early Inner-Biblical Discourse on an Ancient Israelite Wartime Curse," 22-23.

these appearances, it has the sense of victory in war, as John indicates in Rev. 11:7.⁶⁸² In this sense, as part of his victorious campaign, the beast conquers or cuts down the olive trees.⁶⁸³ The text could imagine the lampstands in the sense of the various victorious armies carrying them off from the temple in their wars against God's people.

Moreover, *νικάω* plays a significant role in John's Apocalypse. It appears in each of the letters to the seven churches. In Rev. 2:7, Jesus, speaking to the church at Ephesus, says that the one who conquers will have permission to eat from the tree of life. In 2:11, Jesus promises the church at Smyrna that the second death cannot harm the one who conquers. 2:17 records Jesus promising the church at Pergamum that he will give the one who conquers some of the hidden manna, and a white stone with a new name written on it. Jesus tells the church at Thyatira in 2:26 that the one who conquers will have authority over the nations. 3:5 has Jesus telling the church at Sardis that the one who conquers will have white robes and Jesus will not blot out his or her name from the book of life. Jesus, in 3:12, tells the one who conquers from the church in Philadelphia that that they will be a pillar in the temple of God and will not out of it. Finally, in 3:21, Jesus tells the one who conquers at Laodicea that they will have a place with Jesus on his throne, just as Jesus conquered and sat down with his father on his father's throne.

νικάω is significant in the rest of the Apocalypse as well. In Rev. 5:5, the elders declare that the Lion of Judah has conquered and is worthy to open the scroll with seven seals. In Rev. 6:2, the rider on the white horse "comes out conquering and to conquer (NRSV)."

⁶⁸² 2 Macc. 3:5, 3 Macc. 1:4; 4 Macc. 1:11, 4 Macc. 8:1, 4 Macc. 16:14, 4 Macc. 17:24, 1 Esd. 4:5, Luke 11:22.

⁶⁸³ The use of "conquer," in Rev. 11:7 for the beasts' victory over the witnesses stands in contrast the use of *νικάω* throughout the rest of the Apocalypse. For instance, in Rev. 2:7, the one who conquers will eat from the tree of life. In 2:11, the second death cannot harm the one who conquers. In 2:17, the one who conquers will receive some of the hidden manna, with a white stone and a new name written on it. In 2:26, the one who conquers will have authority over the nations.

Between Rev. 6:2 and 11:7, there are no other instances of the word *νικάω*. All instances prior to 11:7 are positive, in the sense of Jesus exhorting the churches to conquer, and Jesus himself conquers. However, 11:7 begins something like a back and forth affair in the context of warfare. The beast makes war in 11:7 and conquers the witnesses. In 12:11, the brothers conquer the accuser (dragon) by the blood of the lamb. In 13:7, the beast from the abyss makes war on the saints and conquers them. In 15:2, the ones who conquer the beast and its image stand beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. In 17:14, the ten kings, along with the beast, try to make war on the lamb, but the lamb conquers them. Lastly, in 21:7, the ones who conquer will inherit the new heaven and the new earth and the blessings that go along with them.

It appears that in Rev. 11:7, the beast he has gained victory over the witnesses by killing them, or cutting down the olive trees, and destroying the lampstands. However, quite ironically, by their death, the witnesses conquer the beast. Rev. 11:7, 12:11, and 13:7 may form a bit of smaller chiasm, with 12:11 as the center. There, the text reads, “But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life, even in the face of death.”

The blood of the Lamb is the most significant aspect of the conquering for John. In 6:2-9, one reads that the Lion of Judah overcame and by his blood ransomed for God the saints from every tribe, language, people, and nation. One conquers evil, and its characters, such as the dragon and the beasts, by the blood of the lamb and by not clinging to life, even in the face of death, following the model of Jesus. The beast may make war, cut down the olive trees, carry off the lampstands, but he cannot dissuade the testimony.

This leads one to believe that the metaphor of the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands means that the two witnesses are faithful. Throughout Revelation, the

reference to witness is with respect to those who are faithful or truthful, as opposed to those who are false. Since the metaphor attempts to say something about the witnesses, who are legal representatives, and the vehicles carry the sense of the sacred, as standing in the presence of the Lord, and the sense that standing before the Lord means God stands in judgment between the true witnesses and the false witnesses, one concludes these witnesses are true. In other words, to say that the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands (not just any tree or lampstands, they are the ones standing before the Lord), is to say they are true witnesses.

3.9 Co-textual Meaning of the Metaphor: The Two Witnesses are the Two Olive Trees and the Two Lampstands

One must relate the point of the metaphor, that the two witnesses are true or faithful, to the rest of their co-text, since co-text is critical to meaning as well. One attempts to do this here, by tying the metaphor together with the other metaphors and images in the co-text of Rev. 11.

Arguably the most prominent of the Apocalypse's temple passages, Revelation 11:1-14, presents significant interpretive difficulty that grammar and syntax, helpfully, but not exhaustibly disentangle. A careful reading concludes that 11:1-14 is a part of a larger literary unit beginning in 9:13. There, an angel sounds the sixth of seven trumpets, setting in motion a series of events culminating in 11:1-14. In 11:15, the seventh angel sounds the seventh trumpet, thus marking 11:14 as the final verse of the sixth trumpet pericope.⁶⁸⁴ What is more, one must

⁶⁸⁴ One must note that the reference in 7:15 to those who have come out of the great tribulation as serving God day and night in his temple occurs in the context of the sixth seal narrative. The first reference to temple occurs in 3:12, where the one walking among the lampstands (Jesus) writes to the sixth of seven churches (Philadelphia), that he will make the one who overcomes a pillar in the "temple of my God." To this point in Revelation (11:14), all specific references to temple are in the context of the sixth in a series of sevens elements; sixth church (3:12), sixth seal (7:15), sixth trumpet (11:1, 11:19, 14:15, 14:17). Five of the final six references are in the context of the seven angels with the seven plagues or seven bowls of God's wrath. Four of these occur prior to any activity of the angels

understand 9:13-11:14 within the context of the seven trumpets narrative of Revelation 8:1-14:20.

That said, however, one believes it best to identify the sixth trumpet pericope as the largest frame for dealing with the figurative language of 11:1-14 effectively. This is due to the fluidity and multivalence of John's metaphors. Attempts to associate 11:1-14 with too wide a co-text risks the metaphorical identity. It is quite possible to determine the meaning of the metaphor within a smaller sample size and narrowing the frame even more, to 11:1-3, is likely the smallest margin for examining the potential meaning for a temple metaphor here. This is because 11:3 serves as a narrative transition for the remainder of 11:1-14. From 11:3-14, the frame moves from temple to two witnesses and the holy city. While related, the metaphor shifts from temple to witnesses and olive trees.

As with the other metaphors above, a cursory reading of the text reveals that the temple in Revelation 11:1-2 is most likely figurative and more specifically, metaphorical. Within the co-text of the temple, it seems that John provides at least one surface metaphor and another non-copulative verbal metaphor. As one indicates above, chapter one of Revelation, and indeed the entirety of The Apocalypse to this point, serves as a metaphorical prime for Revelation 11:1-14, assisting the reader in processing the metaphorical language. If a surface metaphor and a non-copulative verbal metaphor were present in such proximity, it would be a good indicator in the immediate or near co-text that the passage is dominantly figurative and metaphorical.

Also, because there are at least four clear metaphors in this co-text, Revelation 11:1-14 is likely a part of a composite metaphor, that is, as one defines above, several metaphors appearing together to form a larger picture. These metaphors are also complex, recognizing that some

(15:5-16:1), with the fifth reference occurring in the seventh bowl narrative (16:17). The final reference in Revelation is in 21:22 where there is no temple in the New Jerusalem.

vehicles in the metaphor are themselves potential tenors in additional and more complex metaphors.

The third metaphor is a submerged rather than surface metaphor. It is that of the beast which comes up from the bottomless pit or abyss in 11:7. That it comes from the τῆς ἀβύσσου, or abyss, is key to its identification. BHS and LXX equate the abyss, while vague in many of its associations, with water or deep waters in the biblical text.⁶⁸⁵ The description of this beast probably links it with the beast of Rev. 13:1,⁶⁸⁶ which comes up from the sea, and to whom the dragon gives authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.⁶⁸⁷ The beast in 11:7 comes up from the abyss, or deep sea, kills the two witnesses, and then 11:9 indicates that some from every people, tribe, language, and nation, will gaze on their bodies. The parallels likely mean they are the same beast.⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁵ For example, in the LXX, Ge. 1:2, 7:11, and 8:2, are all correlated with the great and deep waters of the creation and the flood. Deut. 8:7 is another example from the Torah. LXX Ps. 32:7, 41:8, 76:17, 77:15, 103:6, 105:9, 134:6, and 148:7, all connect abyss with deep waters or the sea. The same association continues in LXX Job 38:16 and 41:22. One will find obvious associations of water and the abyss in the Wisdom of Solomon 10:19, Sirach 24:29, Sirach 43:23, Jonah 2:6, Hab. 3:10, Isa. 44:27, Isa. 51:10, Ezek. 26:19, Ezek. 31:4, Ezek. 31:15, Psalms of Solomon 17:21, and in 1 Enoch 17:7. That ancients likely affiliated the deepest water with the abyss seems apparent. See also Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman III, Duriez, Penney, and Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 765. Beale, when discussing the beast in 13:1, remarks that “the ‘sea’ is synonymous with the ‘abyss’,” Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 684. So to Elliot, when discussing the abyss in Revelation 9:1-2, notes the connection of abyss with deep waters, Edward B. Elliot, *Horae Apocalypticæ*. Second ed. (London: Seeley, Burnside, and Seeley, 1846), 409.

⁶⁸⁶ Subsequently one will find the same beast in 17:3 and 20:10.

⁶⁸⁷ The Apocalypse records a rather poetic ending for this beast. As it comes from a watery, deep sea and causes destruction, it experiences torment day and night in a lake of fire as recorded in Revelation 20:10.

⁶⁸⁸ So Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 220; J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation*. ed. Grant R. Osborne, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 140; Easley, *Revelation*, 193. Boxall seems to indicate the beasts are the same, but vaguely writes that the beast in 11:7, “prepares the ground for the monster from the sea ... in chapter 13,” Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, 165. Smalley makes too much here of the differences between the beast of 11:7 and 13:1 with respect to the definite article. 11:7 is articular whereas 13:1 is anarthrous. This leads Smalley to say that the beast of 11:7 is known to John’s audience and the beast of 13:1 is not known, Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*, 280. However, having already introduced the beast in 11:7 with the article, John would not be obligated to continue using it because his audience is now familiar with the beast. It means one can effectively translate 13:1 as definite even in the absence of the definite article, since the lack of an article does not automatically make a noun indefinite. Similarly, the absence of the article in 13:1 may be due to qualitative force, indicating John’s focus shifts in 13:1 to the nature and description of the beast, giving it more detail than in 11:7. Concerning the anarthrous noun with qualitative force, Wallace states, “It is akin to a generic noun in that it focuses on the *kind*. Further, like a generic, it *emphasizes class traits*. Yet unlike generic nouns, a qualitative noun often has in view one individual rather than the class as a

If this is so, the beast from the sea in 13:1 is relatively easy to identify with respect to metaphor. The text of Revelation never reveals the exact tenor associated with this beast, but its fuller description in chapter 13 is dependent upon Daniel's vision of four beasts in Daniel 7:1-8 and Daniel 7:13-28.

In the Daniel 7 passage, Daniel sees four separate beasts coming up out of the sea. The first is like a lion with eagles' wings, the second beast is like a bear, the third beast is like a leopard, and the fourth beast is terrifying and has ten horns. John notably combines these four beasts into one beast in Rev. 13:1-2.

The beast in Rev. 13:1-2 comes from the sea, just as Daniel's four beasts. It has ten horns, just as Daniel's fourth beast. It looks like a leopard, just like Daniel's third beast. It has the feet of a bear, corresponding to Daniel's second beast, which appears as a bear. It also has the mouth of a lion, in correspondence with Daniel's first beast, which appears as a lion.⁶⁸⁹

Furthermore, the beast John sees in Revelation speaks *μεγάλα*, great or boastful things that are blasphemous. Similarly, Daniel uses this term to describe his fourth beast on four occasions, in Daniel 7:7, 8, 11, and 20. In Daniel 7:7, the fourth beast has teeth which are great, *μεγάλους*, and which it uses to devour. In Daniel 7:8, the fourth beast speaks *μεγάλα*, boastful

whole," Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 244. Italics are his. Furthermore, Smalley focuses only on the direct object noun, *θηρίον*, beast, and not the remainder of the sentence. If he had, he would have noticed the construction *ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον*, translated in the NRSV as "a beast rising out of the sea." However, *θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον*, is a fourth position attributive construction whereby the participle, *ἀναβαῖνον*, attributively modifies *θηρίον*, beast. This means that a better translation is that John saw "a beast, one coming from the sea," or "a beast who comes from the sea." There are generally four positions or constructions of attributive participles. The first construction is article+participle+noun. The second is article+noun+article+participle. The third is noun+article+participle. The fourth is noun+participle. As Rev. 13:1 possesses a fourth attributive participial construction, the participle gives definition to the noun and the article need not be present, *ibid.*, 617-618. Aune makes a similar assertion to Smalley regarding the definite article, but concludes the beasts in 11:7, 13:1, and 17:3 are the same and differences are attributed to later redactional additions, Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 616.

⁶⁸⁹ No commentary that this author consulted noted how John reverses the order of the description of the beasts, going from the fourth to the first with respect to Daniel's four beasts. One wonders then, if John creates a kind of chiasm, which highlights the nature of the fourth beast.

things. In Daniel 7:11, Daniel hears the words of one of the beast's horns, which speaks *μεγάλων*, or boastful things. Finally, in Daniel 7:20, Daniel recounts the horn which had a mouth speaking *μεγάλα*, boastful or arrogant words.

While other comparisons are also likely, one last similarity discussed here between John's beast in Rev. 13 and Daniel's fourth beast, is that both are correlated with war. The beast in Rev. 13:7 makes war, *ποιῆσαι πόλεμον*, on the saints, *μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων*. One of the horns of in Daniel 7:21 gathers people to make war, *ἐκεῖνο ἐποίει πόλεμον*, with the saints, *μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων*.⁶⁹⁰

These similarities make it difficult to believe that John has not literarily combined Daniel's images into one terrifying beast. This becomes significant because Daniel 7 makes it clear that the beasts are vehicles in submerged metaphors. In Daniel 7:23, Daniel learns that the fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will arise upon the earth, different from the other kingdoms, i.e. the three previous beasts. Thus, the submerged metaphor is the fourth beast from the sea is a fourth kingdom on the earth. Daniel's text does not reveal the exact names of the kingdoms, but there is some irony in that the beasts come from the sea but as kingdoms rule upon the earth. Likewise, one learns that the horns of the fourth beast in Daniel 7:24, are a submerged metaphor as well and would be the ten horns are ten kings, which will arise from the kingdom.

If Daniel's beasts are vehicles in submerged metaphors, it makes sense that John's one beast in Rev. 13:1 is also the vehicle in a submerged metaphor. In this case, one might read the metaphor as the beast from the sea is a kingdom on the earth and, additionally, its horns are kings that will arise from the kingdom. Since the two beasts of Rev. 11:7 and Rev. 13:1 are the same, Rev. 11:7 provides the third metaphor in the co-text of chapter 11. Therefore, the metaphor of

⁶⁹⁰ The text of Daniel 7:21 quoted here is the Theodotion version as found in Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: With Morphology*. Rahlfs includes the Old Greek Version as well, which reads, *ἐκεῖνο πόλεμον συνιστάμενον πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους*. While there are differences in the two, the idea remains the same.

11:7 should read the beast from the abyss is a kingdom on earth, which makes war against the saints or holy ones of God.

The fourth and last of the readily identifiable metaphors in Rev. 11 is a metaphor in 11:8 where the dead bodies of the two witnesses will lie in streets of the great city, which is prophetically or spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. While scholars debate the meaning of this statement, it at least appears that a metaphor is in mind.⁶⁹¹

Here, the great city at first appears to some to be Jerusalem, as indicated at the end of verse 8, which says, "... where also their Lord was crucified." In this way, some commentators believe that the great city in 11:8 is the same as the holy city in 11:2.⁶⁹² They interpret that the temple in 11:1-2 is a literal temple and the holy city in 11:2 is a literal city, Jerusalem. If this were so, the metaphor surrounding the great city in 11:8 would be Jerusalem is Sodom and Egypt. As Jerusalem cannot literally be Sodom or Egypt, incongruence exists, creating a submerged metaphor.

However, scholars debate the presence of the word πνευματικῶς and the identification the city as Jerusalem in the passage. πνευματικῶς, an adverb, appears in the NT only here in Rev. 11:8 and in 1 Cor. 2:14. There Paul says, "Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of

⁶⁹¹ Contra Osborne, who argues that this refers to literal Jerusalem on three grounds. First, 11:8 says it is the place where the Lord "was crucified," 11:13 says a tenth of the city fell and 7,000 inhabitants died. 10 times 7,000 would equal 70,000, or the supposed population of Jerusalem at the time. Finally, he adds that John could use ἀλληγορούμενα, such as Paul uses in Galatians 4:24, to indicate a figurative interpretation, Osborne, *Revelation*, 426-427. Of the three arguments by Osborne, the first is the only viable, compelling option since it mentions that the Lord "was crucified" there. However, as Beale points out, the structure of the sentence supports not that "where also the Lord was crucified" modifies great city, but that one should take it with Sodom and Egypt. Thus, the he understands the crucifixion of the Lord "spiritually" in these places as well, Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 592. Osborne's second argument stretches the text beyond what it can bear. The text says a tenth of the city fell, not that a tenth of the population died. The distinction also indicates the earthquake killed that the names of 7,000 men and Osborne does not account for the presence of the Greek ὀνόματα, names, and its possible figurative use. Finally, the argument from Galatians 4:24 is at best an argument from silence. No one knows what words John could have used and no one can unequivocally account for why he used the ones that he did.

⁶⁹² So Osborne, *Revelation*, 426.

God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."⁶⁹³ The co-text there indicates that God's Spirit reveals the wisdom of God and the mystery of God, which is Christ crucified, and that by obtaining the Spirit, the people of God are able to discern the gifts of the Spirit.

If spiritual discernment is the principle behind the use of the word *πνευματικῶς*, then the idea may be that those in Rev. 11 who possess God's Spirit can discern that the great city is not, in fact, the holy city of Rev. 11:2,⁶⁹⁴ but rather a city which is no different than Sodom or Egypt, both of which suffered judgment. If so, a strict rendering of the text is the great city is Sodom and Egypt. This is still a metaphor as the great city cannot literally be both Sodom and Egypt.

The identification of the great city, whether it is Jerusalem or something else, is a part of determining the meaning of the metaphor, which will come later.⁶⁹⁵ For now, it is sufficient to note that this is a metaphor and that it contributes to a co-text acting as a metaphorical prime making the likelihood of additional metaphors and figurative language greater.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹³ According to a search of the TLG, the earliest non-biblical or non-Christian use of *πνευματικῶς*, appears to be in Galenus, *de compositione medicamentorum secundum locos libri x*, volume 12, p. 537, line 2, where Galenus seems to write of ailments of the stomach, including those which cause headaches and flatulence, *πνευματικῶς*. The definition of flatulence comes from the use of the TLG's Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek English Lexicon, hereafter LSJ. The Greek of Galenus is from Carl G. Kühn, *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*. (Hildesheim, DE: Olms, 1965), 12:1826. The context of Galenus is not helpful here. There are no scholarly translations of Galenus available in English and possibly no translations at all concerning this work. The work of Coxe is nearly useless as far as comparative semantics is concerned as he does not translate the work but rather describes the main ideas, John Redman Coxe, *The Writings of Hippocrates and Galen*. (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1846), 628-631. Similarly, Hermogenes uses the term but LSJ defines it as "in one breath," in the context of rhetorical strategies, Hugo Rabe, *Hermogenis Opera*. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1969), 93-212.

⁶⁹⁴ Osborne, following Bauckham, writes that "Jerusalem forfeited its place as the Holy City when it rejected its Messiah ...," Osborne, *Revelation*, 427.

⁶⁹⁵ Part of the difficulty in determining the meaning of the metaphor, or even the presence of the metaphor here regarding the great city, is the lack of significant ontological distance between great city and Sodom. The distance is greater between great city and Egypt, but it is not as widely divergent as other metaphors discussed in this work, recall Markmann and Gentner's work on ontological distance in metaphor in Markman and Gentner, "Splitting the Differences: A Structural Alignment View of Similarity," 525.

⁶⁹⁶ By way of reminder, one here prefers the term "prime" to Cameron's metaphorical "tuning," Cameron, "Metaphor and Talk," 202-203.

In addition, it is likely that the great city in view in Rev. 11 is itself the vehicle in submerged metaphor, making it a complex metaphor. Since people from every nation, tribe, tongue, and language occupy this city, it does not appear that a literal Jerusalem is in view.

Given the presence of these four metaphors in Revelation 11, not to mention the many metaphors and other forms of figurative language which precede chapter 11, it is probable that the temple of God, the altar, the worshippers, and the outer court, all found in 11:1-2, are also vehicles in submerged metaphors. These metaphors are a part of the dynamics of the lampstands and olive trees metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4.

Additionally, one must consider other categories of metaphor and figurative language beginning in 11:1-2, since they relate to the submerged metaphors. The first category is that of verbal metaphors. It is likely that the act of measuring or not measuring is a verbal metaphor amid other metaphors as well as the act of trampling on the holy city. The second category are the numbers in Revelation 11, such as forty-two months and 1,260 days.⁶⁹⁷ They are most likely figurative, and, although there is not room for a full inquiry here, the numbers are probably symbolic like the number seven.

3.9.1 Overview of Interpretations Regarding Temple in Revelation 11

Before outlining the potential metaphors in 11:1-2 and their meaning, it is once again helpful to begin with a synopsis of what commentators believe about this passage as it supports, for the most part, that readers understand the figurative nature of the passage, even if they do not agree on the meaning or terminology of the figurative language.

⁶⁹⁷ Russell argues that forty-two months, 1,260 days, and three and a half, are stereotypes for a time of tribulation. He notes how Luke 4:25 and James 5:17 turn the period of drought during Elijah's day into a three and a half year ordeal, rather than the three years recorded in 1 Kgs., Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200 B.C. - A.D. 100*, 195.

At the outset, it is necessary to state that if a reader does not view Revelation 11 as figurative, it is not necessarily because they are incompetent readers of Revelation, although linguistically one cannot rule this out. As above, there are probably several reasons for overlooking the figurative nature of The Apocalypse, not the least of which is inexperience with tenors and vehicles in metaphor, or the way in which John primes his readers. Many individuals unfamiliar with Revelation and its strategies may be tempted to see the opening verses of Revelation 11 as literal if they are unaccustomed to John's style and isolate them from their context.

However, at the other end of the spectrum are those readers who are quite familiar with Revelation, but who, for various reasons, subscribe to a predetermined theological system in which they make conscious choices to understand the temple, the altar, etc. in Rev. 11:1-2 as literal. Based on the linguistic data already submitted here, one is inclined to reject this possibility. That said, one includes several interpretative positions here for a synopsis.

Following the approach taken here, that because chapter 11 contains numerous figurative elements one should expect that the temple elements in 11:1-2 are also figurative, is Kistemaker. One begins with an overview of his commentary because, although his conclusions may vary from this work, his overall supposition is similar.

Kistemaker believes that the measuring rod, the act of measuring, the two olive trees and the two lampstands are figurative and therefore it makes sense the temple is figurative as well. Although he uses the term symbolism instead of metaphor, he concludes that, "Where a passage is filled with symbolism, one would not expect literalism."⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁸ Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 30. Kistemaker is writing about the date of Revelation in this section of his commentary, noting that those who understand the temple in Rev. 11 literally attempt to use its presence there as a reason to date Revelation prior to A.D. 70.

He begins his assessment of the metaphors in Rev. 11:1-2 at the end of verse two, arguing for a figurative interpretation of the holy city.⁶⁹⁹ Although the combination of the temple language and the holy city leads many people to believe the holy city is Jerusalem, Kistemaker is quick to point out that the name Jerusalem never appears in chapter 11.

To be sure, the nomenclature of holy city refers to Jerusalem in many places throughout both the OT and the NT. Kistemaker includes many passages where he sees the holy city as Jerusalem in the OT, but his strongest examples are Neh. 11:1, and 11:18. He includes Ps. 48, but there the terminology is the “city of our God, the holy mountain.” While the idea may be the same, the word holy does not modify city. Similarly, he mentions Dan. 9:24 which speaks of a holy city, later identified as Jerusalem in Dan. 9:25, but does not address the possibility that even this reference may be figurative.⁷⁰⁰

In the NT, Kistemaker sees Mt. 4:5, where Satan takes Jesus to the holy city and has him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, as a reference to the literal Jerusalem. He also references Mt. 27:52-53, where after Jesus breathes his last, the earth shook, rocks split, the tombs opened and the resurrected bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep go into the holy city after Jesus’ resurrection and appear to many people.

He concludes that from the time of Matt. 27:53 until Rev. 11:2, the term holy city does not appear. In the intervening period, especially in the book of Acts, Kistemaker argues that the Spirit of God no longer resides in the temple or in Jerusalem, but in God’s people.⁷⁰¹

He goes on to note the phrase holy city appears four times in Revelation, with the other three all referring to the New Jerusalem in 21:2, 21:10, and 22:19. Since the New Jerusalem is a

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 322.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 326.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

metaphor for people, and not a place, this leads him to conclude, “The Christian church is symbolically called the holy city, for in that place God dwells with his covenant people.”⁷⁰² One disagrees with his assessment of this language as symbolic, but agrees that it is not literal.

After discussing his belief that the holy city is figurative, Kistemaker quickly moves to conclude that the temple in 11:1 is not the literal temple, but rather is a symbol “of the true church that worships the triune God.”⁷⁰³ Since John’s task is to measure this temple, Kistemaker posits that the purpose of measuring is “to delimit the area that is holy from that which is profane,” and that “measuring means to protect God’s temple, altar, and people.”⁷⁰⁴

Combining the image of the saints in Rev. 7:9 with what he calls the symbols in Rev. 11, Kistemaker argues that when John measures the temple, one finds no actual measurements because it is an impossible task.⁷⁰⁵ The saints in 7:9 are too numerous to count and thus in an overly literal view, if these two ideas are combined, they would form something of a paradox. One cannot measure what one cannot count. Oddly then, upon connecting Rev. 7:9 with 11:1-2, Kistemaker offers yet another conclusion of measuring, writing it “symbolizes the knowledge and care God provides for his people.”⁷⁰⁶

Having offered his view of the temple and the measuring, Kistemaker then infers that the altar in 11:1 refers the altar of incense, not the altar of sacrifice, because the altar of sacrifice is in the outer court, which John is not to measure. Drawing upon the altar of incense imagery in Rev. 8:3-5, where the incense is the prayers of the saints, Kistemaker believes the altar “signifies that that the saints have access to God and enjoy his protective care.”⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰² Ibid., 327.

⁷⁰³ Ibid., 324.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., 324-325.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 325.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

As the holy city, temple, and altar all represent God's people, and the measuring of these people represents God's protection, Kistemaker infers that the leaving out of the outer court in 11:3 then refers to those who are not protected by God, that is, the profane, "the people who refuse to repent of their evil deeds."⁷⁰⁸

Kistemaker also offers a brief survey of the numbers forty-two and 1,260. He correctly notes that forty-two months is the equivalent of 1,260 days, and that both are equivalent to three and a half years, or times, time, and half a time, which one also finds in Rev. 12:6 and 12:14.⁷⁰⁹ After addressing the problems with an overly literal view of these numbers, he concludes that, in conjunction with the trampling, they refer "... to a period of persecution that Christians suffer throughout the ages."⁷¹⁰

What Kistemaker does not explicitly address is that he ostensibly views trampling as a verbal metaphor and that in his explanation of trampling he equates the outer court and the nations, or Gentiles in some translations, and thus making these complex metaphors.

Aune, in his important work on Revelation, begins his assessment of the temple in Rev. 11:1-2 ambiguously, noting that the temple could be either on earth or in heaven.⁷¹¹ If on earth, it refers to the earthly temple, prior to A.D. 70,⁷¹² or if in heaven, it refers to God's heavenly sanctuary.⁷¹³ This is significant because many commentators see the temple in some way as the church of Jesus Christ, regardless of whether it is a symbol or a metaphor, or as the literal

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 327.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹¹ Aune oversteps a bit here, indicating that most commentators argue that the temple is earthly and is therefore the literal Jerusalem temple. While he offers examples of those who hold this view, it is impossible to give a statistical analysis resulting in the conclusion "most," see Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 596.

⁷¹² Walvoord is an example of one who sees the temple in Rev. 11:1-2 as a physical temple. He writes, "The Temple here is apparently that which will be in existence during the great tribulation," John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, (Galaxy Software, 2008), 176.

⁷¹³ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 586. Aune, like many scholars, seems to operate on the false assumption that John's references to temple must necessarily consider the events of A.D. 70.

Jerusalem temple. Aune is rare in that he sees it in binary terms, the physical Jerusalem temple or the heavenly sanctuary after which the Hebrews modeled the earthly temple, but not the church.

Aune, attempting to present fairly the two possibilities of a heavenly or earth temple, outlines reasons for understanding the temple in each of the above categories. He lists six reasons for understanding the temple in Rev. 11 as earthly, some of which may be stronger than others are.⁷¹⁴ One here offers Aune's synopsis of the reasons with some clarifying notes absent in his commentary: (i) the notion that the heavenly worshippers of God need protection seems unnecessary. (ii) According to 10:1, the seer is on earth when he witnesses the descent of the mighty angel ... [and] when he is commanded to measure the temple of God in 11:1. (iii) The symbolic interpretation of vv. 1-2 ... makes it unnecessary to suppose that a heavenly temple is in view. (iv) The local references in vv. 1-2 suggest that the author is using a source that originated at least within Palestinian Christianity. (v) The temple in vv. 1-2 cannot be the heavenly temple because John cannot measure part of the precinct since the Gentiles will take it over for forty-two months. (vi) Early Christian literature never uses the temple at Jerusalem elsewhere to symbolize Christians or the Church.⁷¹⁵

From the outset, there are some difficulties with the positions represented above. First, and possibly foremost, is the unnecessary bifurcation of heaven and earth that underlies the argument. Through the apocalypse, John brings heaven and earth together and one must consider at least the possibility that the temple is both heavenly and earthly. In the same way, the literal temple reflected the heavenly one in the OT, the figurative temple on earth reflects the heavenly sanctuary.

⁷¹⁴ Aune is not necessarily advocating for these positions, but summarizing the positions of those who argue for an earthly temple.

⁷¹⁵ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 596.

Moreover, the idea that heavenly worshippers do not need protection, if in fact, the verb measuring is metaphorical for protection, is merely opinion. It is quite possible, as a matter of offering hope and comfort to earthly believers, John is communicating that those in a heavenly temple are no longer subject to suffering, a matter that John also addresses in Rev. 7:17 and 21:4. For a community facing trials of various kinds, such hope is substantial.

Furthermore, Aune entertains Wellhausen's theory that Rev. 11:1-2 has its origin in a Zealot prophecy prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.⁷¹⁶ Such a prophecy, which is speculative at best, posits that the Zealots would retreat into the inner sanctuaries of the temple, which were inviolable, while the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the outer courts. Wellhausen, according to Aune, bases this theory on Josephus, who reports that the Romans used false prophets to encourage the people to enter the inner sanctuaries as a means of keeping them all from escaping.⁷¹⁷ A plan that worked as 6,000 of them died in those inner courts.

Instead of disproving the idea that a heavenly temple may not need protecting, the idea that this Zealot prophecy failed may do just the opposite, instead demonstrating that the only inviolable temple is the one in heaven and those there are safe.

The argument that the seer is on earth is also an imprecise one and is an assumption, not a clear reality of the text. Rev. 10:1 uses the Greek *καταβαίνοντα*, a present active accusative masculine singular participle, which many English versions translate "coming down," to describe what an angel was doing from heaven. Equally, possible translations of the word could include "descending" or "going down", as in Matt. 3:16, where the Greek grammatical form is similar,

⁷¹⁶ Ibid., 595.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

and the NASB says the Spirit of God descends as a dove.⁷¹⁸ The use of the word does not require an earthly perspective.

One sees this best earlier in The Apocalypse than in 10:1. Going back to 8:1, John appears as still located in heaven, the place to which he ascends in 4:1. As 8:6 transitions to John seeing seven angels with seven trumpets, John remains in heaven. When the sixth angel sounds his trumpet in 9:13, one could argue John is still in heaven. In these instances, the action begins in heaven with the angels and they direct these actions at the earth. It is entirely reasonable to assume that John is still in heaven, the original location of his vision, in both 10:1 and 11:1. God allows John to see a heavenly perspective as well as the earthly, and this does not require John to be in one place or other. One could even suppose that John's position is that of one who stands between both places.

The ideas that a symbolic interpretation render a symbolic understanding of temple unnecessary and that a Palestinian Christian origin for 11 are both vague assertions with little substantive effects on the potential for the temple being a metaphor. One has already demonstrated previously that an author may use multiple forms of figurative language, be it imagery, symbol, or metaphor, in a single passage for communication.

Ironically, the assertion that a symbolic interpretation eliminates the potential of figurative language within the text is self-defeating. A symbolic interpretation understands all the language of a potential text as non-literal since symbols stand for something beyond themselves as agreed upon in cultural communities.

⁷¹⁸ See also Matt. 11:23 NASB, where Capernaum descends to Hades or Matt. 28:2 NASB where an angel of the Lord descends from heaven.

Although Aune begins his discussion of temple ambiguously, he is clearer in seeing 11:3-13 as prophetic narrative and that it has “an essentially parabolic or allegorical character.”⁷¹⁹ He refers to the two witnesses as two prophets and believes they represent “the Christian witness in the world,” while the great city represents Jerusalem, but also, in a “wider sense the world of humankind.”⁷²⁰

Similarly, Aune sees the 1,260 days during which the witnesses prophesy as “a symbolic number for a limited eschatological period.” He also uses the word symbol for Sodom and Egypt in the Rev. 11:3-13 section, calling them symbols of “depravity and bondage.”⁷²¹

Although the beast kills the witnesses, Aune does not identify the beast with anything in the chapter, other than he personifies the beast using the masculine pronouns he and him, which may betray some belief that the beast is more than it appears.⁷²²

Continuing to favor the idea of symbolism, Aune also writes that the act of measuring the temple is symbolic.⁷²³

Beale, in his biblical theology of the temple, begins his discussion of temple, and later Revelation 11, by tracing the various ideas of temple in both the Old and New Testaments. Starting with Genesis, he ostensibly argues that the earth is God’s temple.⁷²⁴ In his discussion of the Garden in the opening chapters of Genesis, he seemingly opposes the traditional view of the idea of a Garden of Eden, seeing them as separate, yet related places. He posits that Eden is

⁷¹⁹ Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 586.

⁷²⁰ Ibid. He uses the word “represent” but does not identify the prophets or great city as metaphors or symbols.

⁷²¹ Ibid., 587.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Walvoord, although understanding the temple as literal, sees the act of measuring as symbolic, comparing Rev. 11 to events in Zechariah 2 and Ezekiel 40, Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 176. He concludes, “The act of measuring seems to signify that the area belongs to God in some special way.”

⁷²⁴ One uses the term ostensibly because Beale does not expressly state this, but it is clear this is what he intends.

God's innermost sanctuary, or the most holy place, and that the Garden, which is attached to Eden, is the holy place, and the land and sea outside of the Garden, serve as the outer court.⁷²⁵

In this tripartite structure, Beale sees the temple in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 11:1-4, Beale believes that the temple John is to measure is the "inner court" and as such, "stands for true, spiritual Israel," which he defines as God's people, or the church.⁷²⁶ The outer court he views as the "physical bodies of God's true people, which are susceptible to harm."⁷²⁷

Mounce too, sees the entirety of Revelation 11 as "symbolic,"⁷²⁸ noting the chapter addresses "...the fate of the witnessing church during its final period of opposition and persecution."⁷²⁹ He sees the measuring as protection "against spiritual danger," rather than protection from "physical suffering and death."⁷³⁰ He views the temple as the church and the altar as the altar of incense, though he does not identify any metaphorical or symbolic value for the altar. He also believes the outer court as symbolic of the church given over to persecution in the last days.⁷³¹

One of the underlying issues in approaching Rev. 11 is the presumption by many readers, particularly American evangelical readers, that Rev. 11 is a futuristic text.⁷³² According to Beale, individuals assuming an *a priori* position of futurism understand that everything from Rev. 4-

⁷²⁵ Gregory K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, ed. D.A. Carson, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 74-75. Beale's description appears to draw heavily upon Wenham. Although Beale uses an article of the same name published in another place, one may also find the article here Gordon Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Period of the Bible* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986).

⁷²⁶ Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, 314.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Mounce notes that, "Symbolism is not a denial of historicity but a matter of literary genre," Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 218. This is not how one uses the term symbol in this work. Symbol and symbolism are not genres, but rather functions of words and objects.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., 219.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 220.

⁷³² Gregg provides a list of the most influential, contemporary futurists, most of which are from the U.S.A., Gregg, *Revelation, Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, 32-33.

22:5 are futuristic to John and his first-century readers.⁷³³ Since there is no temple in existence during the time of the writing of the Apocalypse, a literalist and a futurist must necessarily assume that the chapter 11 is futuristic if John is to measure a temple. This is part of the futurist belief, particularly in the current world environment, that someone will build a third temple in Jerusalem. There must be something physical to measure.

This is the position of Walvoord, who begins his assessment of chapter 11 much the same way as others, quoting Henry Alford, who says chapter 11 “is undoubtedly one of the most difficult in the whole Apocalypse.”⁷³⁴ Then, however, Walvoord seeks to make Revelation one of the simplest, by stating that he takes all terms in Rev. 11 “normally.” What he means by normal is literal, as indicated by his including the word “literal” five times in a single paragraph. The great city is the literal city of Jerusalem. The time periods [sic] are literal. The two witnesses are two individuals. The three and a half days are literal. The earthquake is literal. The death of the witnesses is literal.⁷³⁵

The problem with such a view is its unsustainability. One cannot assert such a thing in a book so obviously filled with figurative language. Even Walvoord himself, on the next page, only four paragraphs removed from his diatribe on literal interpretation, writes concerning the temple, “A number of questions can be raised concerning this symbolic picture.”⁷³⁶ A symbol, as one has already defined, is in its most basic sense, when one thing stands for another. That is not literal and Walvoord offers no methods or definitions for understanding the symbolic versus the literal.

⁷³³ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 46.

⁷³⁴ Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 175.

⁷³⁵ Ibid.

⁷³⁶ Ibid., 176. Similarly, Walvoord admits that the lampstands in 1:20 are symbols, and the implied olive oil (nowhere is olive oil in the text) is “symbolic of the power of the Spirit issuing in witness,” *ibid.*, 43.

To be fair, there is literal language in Revelation and this is in no way intends to excoriate Walvoord.⁷³⁷ However, to force upon Rev. 11 a woodenly literal agenda, without offering a reason as to why this is, the best approach seems irresponsible.

Those who are not beholden to such a literal prison are free to explore the natural linguistic processes of Revelation, including the potential in the verses for metaphor.

3.9.2 *Revelation 11:1-2 as Metaphor*

Given the discussion above and the presence of multiple metaphors in Rev. 11, it is highly reasonable, and probable, that John's entire chapter is figurative, and that Rev. 11:1-2 are metaphors as well. As one has argued before, the presence of these metaphors, among other forms of figurative language, should serve as metaphorical primes, through which John "tunes" the reader to expect additional metaphors and figurative expressions.

John begins chapter 11 using a non-copulative verbal metaphor "measure." This would be the focus of the metaphor as it relates to measuring the temple, the altar, and the worshippers.⁷³⁸ The smallest frame of the metaphor is 11:1-2 where John receives a measuring rod before measuring, though John only implies the act of measuring as he does not explicitly do this.

The verb that John uses, μέτρησον, if taken by itself, could indicate either a non-metaphorical or a metaphorical use of measure.⁷³⁹ It appears relatively few times in the LXX and

⁷³⁷ In the dispensational scheme, the temple in Revelation 11 is a literal temple, rebuilt in Jerusalem, in order that the Antichrist has something to desecrate during the seven-year tribulation, Thomas McCall and Zola Levitt, *Israel and Tomorrow's Temple*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 144-145.

⁷³⁸ In a search of Adams' book on biblical metaphors, the only potential metaphor in Rev. 11 that appears is worship, James Rowe Adams, s.v. "Worship." *The Essential Reference Book for Biblical Metaphors* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005).. The book has little to do with metaphors and is an unscholarly attempt at a selective English Bible lexicon.

⁷³⁹ It is somewhat inconsistent that even those who read Rev. 11 with a literalist approach still see in the verb "measure" a metaphorical meaning. Beale notes that some dispensational commentators understand the word

in all cases, refers to the measuring of an item by weight or volume or length.⁷⁴⁰ However, in the NT, the image is quite different. Beginning with Matthew 7:2, many instances of its use are with respect to judging a person, as in “the measure you give will be the measure you get.”⁷⁴¹

Its uses in Revelation are here in 11:1-2 and in 21:15. In 21:15, the angel has a golden measuring rod to measure the city, its walls, and its gates. In both cases, a first glance could lead a person to believing a non-metaphorical use is in view since objects make up at least a part of the measuring and John uses an object for measuring.⁷⁴²

One expects this uncertainty surrounding the verbal metaphor. Van der Watt points out verbal metaphors are less explicit than metaphors that contain *nomina*, such as surface and submerged metaphors in a copulative construction.⁷⁴³

The issue requires further examination. In Revelation 11:1, the angel gives to John a reed, *κάλαμος*, which is *δμοιος*, “like,” a rod or staff, *ῥάβδος*.⁷⁴⁴ This is probably a simile. Since one may use a reed for many purposes, the author makes its purpose clearer here.

measure to mean physical protection, Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 557. On the one hand, they argue for a literal temple, but on the other, see the verb as metaphorical, although they perhaps would not identify it as such. The problem here is that when verbs act as metaphor, or the focus in a metaphorical statement, the *nomina* surrounding the verb are inherently impacted as well, so Van der Watt, Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 21-22.

⁷⁴⁰ Exod. 16:18, Num. 35:5, Ruth 3:15, Isa. 40:12. TLG reveals a similar use in in Herodas, Mime 6, line 6, where Kritto accuses Metro of painfully measuring out every grain of corn and complaining when she loses one, Ian C. Cunningham, *Herodas. Mimiambi*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). The play on words between the character Metro and her measuring may be a part of the bawdy poem’s metaphor. For an analysis of its content and poetry, see Benjamin M. Slagowski, “Aesthetic and Ethical Criticism in Herodas’ *Mimiamboi*” (M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, April 2013), 56-61.

⁷⁴¹ Mark 4:24, Luke 6:38, 2 Cor. 10:12. The word follows this meaning in 1 Clement 13 as well, Clement of Rome, “The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 8.

⁷⁴² Van der Watt provides excellent example of verbs, pruning and bear fruit, from John 15 that one could easily read as literal apart from the co-text, Van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John*, 39-41.

⁷⁴³ Ibid., 21.

⁷⁴⁴ This word for “staff” is common in the LXX and is the Greek word used for the staff Moses carried in Exod. 4:2, 4:4, 4:17, and 4:20. So too for Aaron’s staff in Exod. 7:9. Judg. 6:21 has a staff in the hands of the angel of the Lord as well.

It is worth noting that the two words for reed and staff appear together in 2 Kgs. 18:21, and they are clearly a surface metaphor. This is significant because the Greek word for staff appears 117 times in the OT, but the Greek word for reed only appears 28 times. The reference in 2 Kgs. 18:21 is the only place they appear together and it is metaphorical. The NRSV reads, “See, you are relying on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it.” The metaphor is Egypt is a broken reed of a staff.⁷⁴⁵

With this reed, which is like a staff, the angel tells John to measure. If one only looked at the verb for measure in Rev. 11, and not for the combination of reed and measuring as the frame demands, it would be easy to overlook the likely intertextual influence of this passage, which is Ezekiel 40:3.

In Ezek. 40:3, the Lord takes Ezekiel to a very high mountain in Israel. Upon arriving there, Ezekiel sees a man whose appearance shone like bronze. In his hand, he holds a linen cord and a measuring reed.⁷⁴⁶ The LXX has *κάλαμος μέτρου*, “reed of measure,” using a genitive construction where the genitive “measure” describes the purpose of the reed.⁷⁴⁷ It combines two *nomina* into a similar construction to what Rev. 11 does using the verb “measure” and the two *nomina*, reed and staff.

⁷⁴⁵ Whereas Egypt is a broken reed, Isa. 42:3 describes God’s servant as a bruised reed. 3 Macc. 2:22 uses reed in a simile, “He shook him ... as a reed is shaken by the wind...”

⁷⁴⁶ The NRSV renders, *σπαρτίον*, as linen cord, but it may be best to view it simply as a small cord as in Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 562.

⁷⁴⁷ Wallace writes that in the thinking of some grammarians, the genitive has more emphasis than an adjective, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 76. The genitive here is most likely a descriptive genitive, meaning it has adjectival force. This kind of genitive is the most common use of the genitive, at least in the NT, *ibid.*, 78. One also wonders if this is a Genitive of Product, as Wallace labels it, *ibid.*, 106. Although this category is rare, the Ezek. 40:3 context may fit. A Genitive of Product is where the substantive in the genitive is the product of the noun. In this case, the reed/staff produces a measurement.

Considering the Ezek. 40 context, there are some significant differences from John. As one mentions previously, John often changes OT images, allusions, and references to suit his own purposes. He does so on so many occasions,⁷⁴⁸ that it would be noteworthy if he did not.

In Ezek. 40, the one holding the staff and carrying out the measuring is the man whose appearance was like bronze.⁷⁴⁹ In Rev. 11, John is the one with the staff. In Ezek. 40, the man carries out the task of measuring, where this is absent in Rev. 11. Ezek. 40:5 records the staff is six cubits long, while such a measurement is absent from John's staff in Rev. 11:1-2.⁷⁵⁰

Additionally, there is no command to measure in Ezekiel, but in John, the angel gives two direct commands, "Arise and measure."⁷⁵¹ The man measures every aspect of the temple, giving

⁷⁴⁸ One has already discussed these differences regarding the seven lampstands of Rev. 1 and the two beasts of Rev. 13.

⁷⁴⁹ An angel measures the city in Rev. 21:15-17.

⁷⁵⁰ Osborne goes too far by interposing the staff in Ezekiel on Rev. 11:1, by saying it was ten feet four inches in length, Osborne, *Revelation*, 409.

⁷⁵¹ The angel's commands are interesting in that "Ἐγείρε, rise or arise, is a present active imperative, whereas μέτρησον, measure, is an aorist active imperative. The same syntax is in Rev. 10:8 where the angel tells John, "Go, take the scroll..." Go is present imperative and take is aorist imperative. One found no commentators who noted the shift from the present to the aorist. The shift in tense is important, as the present and aorist imperatives exhibit different aspectual nuances. The present imperative, when used in a specific situation like Rev. 11:1-2, rather than in a general situation, communicates an ingressive-progressive idea. Wallace believes the force of this kind of present imperative is, "begin and continue," Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 721. In this case, the angel commands John to arise and the expectation is that he will continue in this posture of readiness. The aorist imperative, on the other hand, generally focuses upon the whole of the action, rather than on a beginning, ending, etc. However, it can focus on the inception of action in specific situations. The ingressive aorist appears in specific, rather than general situations, as here in Rev. 11:1-2. Wallace believes the aorist imperative emphasizes urgency of action, and can, in certain contexts, stress that the action is not momentary, *ibid.*, 720. Young contrasts this view, arguing against urgency and ingression and demonstrating several NT instances where a present and aorist imperative are in the same context. He believes one should approach the aorist as commanding the whole and let context determine nuances, Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 143. In the end, Young and Wallace are saying the same thing, that context determines nuance. In Rev. 11:1-2, one believes the actions are ingressive, focusing on a behavior that must urgently take place, and not on actions that are already taking place. John has not been measuring the temple already and so the command cannot be a customary imperative, which author's use to inspire action already happening. "Ἐγείρε as a command, is not common in the NT. In Matt. 9:5, Mark 2:9, Luke 5:23, Jesus argues with the scribes over healing a paralyzed man (see also John 5:8). Jesus forgives his sins and when the scribes protest that he has no authority to do so, Jesus says, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk.'" In this case, "Stand up," or arise, must be ingressive. The paralytic surely has not been walking already (Mark 3:3 and Luke 6:8 have similar uses in the healing of a man with a withered hand). In Matthew 17:7 Jesus a passive, rather than active form of the same imperative, telling the disciples to get up. The context is clear that they had fallen to the ground in fear. Again, the focus is ingressive. Matt. 26:46 and Mark 14:42 have the rarer middle passive form of the same imperative in the Gethsemane narrative, with Jesus again telling the disciples to "get up ... my betrayer is at hand." The text demonstrates the disciples were resting, and again the focus is ingressive. Mark 5:41 records Jesus raising a

what appear to be precise measurements,⁷⁵² including measuring the altar in 41:22, and the outer court, in Ezek. 40:17-23, 42:1, and 42:7. John has no measurements of the altar in Rev. 11 and the angel tells him “do not measure,” the court outside the temple.⁷⁵³

Therefore, while the Ezekiel background likely influenced John, like his other intertextual references, it would be unwise to impose fully Ezekiel’s text upon Rev. 11.

However, there are some other issues to consider. For instance, the measuring in Ezekiel is figurative.⁷⁵⁴ Ezek. 43:10, in a passage that summarizes the extensive measuring by the man with a bronze appearance, concludes with the man (angel) saying to Ezekiel, “As for you mortal, describe this temple to the house of Israel, and let them measure the pattern; and let them be ashamed of their iniquities.”

The goal of the measuring was to bring about shame concerning the sin of Israel, and encourage holiness.⁷⁵⁵ Granted, LXX Ezekiel 43:10 uses slightly different language and “measure” in the NRSV is in accord with the Hebrew rather than LXX.⁷⁵⁶ Instead, the LXX says, in one’s own translation, “they will turn away from their sin and see the arrangement or diagram of it (house of Israel/temple), and be ashamed.” Ezek. 43:11 is similar, using yet another word,

girl from the dead, commanding her “Arise!” This is most assuredly ingressive. Other clear uses of the ingressive command to get up are in Mark 10:49, Luke 8:54, John 14:31, Eph. 5:14 (Paul’s use here is the only imperative use of arise outside the gospels and Revelation). Luke 7:14 is a clear example of the aorist imperative as ingressive when Jesus raises a young man from the dead. The pattern of the NT has the command arise originating with Jesus.⁷⁵² i.e. one cubit in Ezek. 40:8, eight cubits and two cubits in 40:9, ten cubits and thirteen cubits in 40:11.

⁷⁵³ μή αὐτήν μετρήσης is aorist active subjunctive, second person singular. It is the classic form of the prohibitive subjunctive. Wallace says of the prohibitive subjunctive, “Its force is equivalent to an imperative after μή, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 469. Blass, Debrunner, and Funk say little about the prohibitive subjunctive, Blass, Debrunner, and Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 183-184.

⁷⁵⁴ Measuring is figurative in 2 Cor. 10:12 as well. See also Ps. 39:5 where measuring refers to the length of one’s life, and Job 28:25 where it likens the creation of the seas to God measuring out the waters.

⁷⁵⁵ In accord with Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*. ed. Bruce Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, *The Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 257.

⁷⁵⁶ The Hebrew word for measure here, which one discusses below, appears 52 times in 14 books of the OT. Thirty-six of those are in Ezekiel, for 69% of the total uses, which is extremely high corpus density. Sixteen are in chapter 40, seven in chapter 41, six in chapter 42, one in 43, one in 45, and five in chapter 47. One chapter alone, 40, accounts for 44% of Ezekiel’s uses, making the linguistic density of chapter 40 astronomically high within the OT corpus. This density only increases if one views chapters 40-47 as a unit.

διαγράψεις, from διαγράφω, diagraph, a design marked by lines.⁷⁵⁷ The NRSV follows the BHS here, which reads, וַיִּמְדּוּ אֶת-תְּכֵנִית, w·mdd ēt·tōk·nîṭ, “...let them measure the pattern.”⁷⁵⁸ There is something sermonic, prophetic, in the measuring.

This type of prophetic message is in keeping with other prophetic visions that have as their meaning prophetic messages or calls to covenant faithfulness. Jer. 1:11ff, where Jeremiah sees the boiling pot tilting from the north is a good example.⁷⁵⁹ When an act itself or a portrait, such as that in Jeremiah, serves as a message, then by default it is figurative, since it stands for something other than itself.

Fredenburg adroitly notes two critical issues concerning Ezekiel’s vision of the temple that are suggestive for Rev. 11:1-2. He writes, “The visionary temple had been constructed by someone other than Israel.”⁷⁶⁰ Presumably, this means God built the temple in the vision and is consistent with later NT accounts that God does not dwell in temples made by human hands.

Additionally, Fredenburg writes, regarding the structures in Ezekiel’s vision, “...all the buildings lacked one crucial element: the people.”⁷⁶¹ In Ezekiel 44:2, the gates are not open, no one may enter, and in 44:4, God enters the temple and no foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, may enter the sanctuary. Unlike Ezekiel’s temple, the temple in Rev. 11:1-2 has worshippers and this difference is noteworthy.

⁷⁵⁷ Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 136.

⁷⁵⁸ Translation from Christo Van der Merwe, *The Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2004). The choice of “let them measure,” is properly imperatival, befitting the w^eqatal form (Qal, waw+perfect). Putnam writes that “in procedural or instructional material (including legal texts), w^eqatal lists the steps to be followed, and is often imperatival,” Putnam, *Hebrew Bible Insert: A Student's Guide to the Syntax of Biblical Hebrew*, 29.

⁷⁵⁹ So also Beale, who calls this “an acted-out parable,” Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 557.

⁷⁶⁰ Brandon L. Fredenburg, *Ezekiel*. ed. Terry Briley and Paul Kissling, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2002), 377.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

From the perspective of BHS, Isaiah 65:7 is similarly important to the discussion of measuring. Like Ezekiel's text in 40-44, Isaiah 65:7 deals with the iniquities of God's people, recording, "...because they offered incense on the mountains and reviled me in their hills, I will measure into their laps full payment of their actions."

Jeremiah 31:39 is also worth considering regarding a metaphorical view of measuring.⁷⁶² There, God declares, "And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then to Goah." This measuring comes in the context of a city built for the Lord and about this city, Jer. 31:40 says, "...it shall never again be uprooted or overthrown." Although this passage speaks of a measuring line and not a measuring reed, the word for measure is the same in Hebrew. The Greek is slightly different, but the idea is the same.⁷⁶³

Zechariah, in Zech. 2:1 in English, Zech. 2:5 in BHS and LXX, sees an angel with a rope of measurement in his hand.⁷⁶⁴ After the angel measures Jerusalem, the passage (2:4-5NRSV) concludes writing, "Jerusalem shall be inhabited like villages without walls... For I will be a wall of fire all around it, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within it."

From these examples, as well as the co-text, it is highly probable that measuring is metaphorical.⁷⁶⁵ What the metaphor means is another matter and, as one demonstrated in the overview above, a matter of great debate. One believes that the metaphor here is likely

⁷⁶² One bases this reference on the NRSV and BHS. The LXX of this reference is Jer. 38:39.

⁷⁶³ διαμέτρησης is used here, and also in 2 Chron. 3:3, where it refers to Solomon's measurements of the temple, and 2 Chron. 4:2 regarding the measurements of the molten sea. One also finds it Ezek. 42:15 and 45:3 with respect to the temple.

⁷⁶⁴ חֵבֶל מִדָּה, ḥēḇel mid-dāh', the word measurement is in construct with rope, basically functioning as a genitive descriptor. The LXX has "cord of geometry," σχοινίον γεωμετρικόν.

⁷⁶⁵ BDAG, instead of metaphor, calls such uses non-spatial, Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 633.

multivalent, most assuredly referring to the holiness of God's temple as in Ezek. 40, and perhaps even referring to protection, something like a wall, as in Zech. 2:1.⁷⁶⁶

To arrive at the meaning, one believes some exploration of the analogy involved in the metaphor is necessary. John is measuring the temple and this is therefore analogous to an artisan, or carpenter measuring out their creation or building. The same is true for the angel in Ezek. 40, or in Zech. 2. These builders and artisans demonstrate an exactness and a line of demarcation. Since the measuring is a prophecy, one can also see an analogy between the work of the messenger and the builder. Delivering the prophecy is analogous to measuring a building.

In this way, the measuring of Rev. 11:1 interacts with, substitutes for, and ultimately replaces the idea of the prophecy, to the extent that the measuring of the temple almost completely erases any thought of the prophetic commission from chapter 10. What is more, is this act of measuring, and the remainder of Rev. 11:1-13, is the second woe according to Rev. 11:14.

Without a doubt, Rev. 11:1-13 does not contain all the elements of a prophetic woe oracle from the OT, nor does it follow the pattern of direct address in the woe oracles of the OT,⁷⁶⁷ but John is always changing OT images and there is reason to believe this is another instance.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁶ Den Dulk creates a dualism between judgment and protection, not considering other meanings, and makes an unconvincing claim that measuring refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, Matthijs Den Dulk, "Measuring the Temple of God: Revelation 11.1-2 and the Destruction of Jerusalem," *New Testament Studies* 54, no. 3 (July 2008): 438.

⁷⁶⁷ Although Ramsey indicates that the pattern of direct address, especially when proclaiming guilt, is not necessary if the accused is not present in the court, George W. Ramsey, "Speech-Forms in Hebrew Law and Prophetic Oracles," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96, no. 1 (March 1977): 52.

⁷⁶⁸ A basic introduction to the woe oracle is D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese Jr., *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 163.

A common element to woe oracles is the role of the witness. Rev. 11 is replete with witness language, and the presence of two witness certainly contributes to this possibility.⁷⁶⁹ It would fit the idea that Rev. 11 is a prophetic judgment against the nations, as are most of the other events in the trumpet blasts.⁷⁷⁰

According to Gerstenberger the purpose of the woe oracle is “to describe a person or a group of persons in regard to what they are doing, their deeds being the cause for the foreboding woe-cry.”⁷⁷¹ Indeed, the woe is a warning of impending doom.⁷⁷²

This is consistent with the woe oracle the eagle pronounces in Rev. 8:13 concerning the final three trumpets blasts, of which Rev. 11:1-2 is one. In 8:13, the eagle cries, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow.” The woes are directed towards the inhabitants of the earth, which is always an expression regarding those who do not worship God.⁷⁷³

Moreover, following the woe of Rev. 11, 12:12 contains an additional woe against the inhabitants of the earth. In this woe, John distinguishes clearly between the inhabitants of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth.⁷⁷⁴ The loud voice in heaven says that the inhabitants of the

⁷⁶⁹ Shea sees the witness motif in Revelation as part of its larger covenantal form, and includes Rev. 11 in his discussion of witnesses and their import to covenantal structures, Shea, “The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches,” 73.

⁷⁷⁰ Bandy sees Rev. 11 as part of a covenant lawsuit in which the two witnesses, “offer legal testimony, verified with supernatural power for the purpose of provoking repentance,” Bandy, “The Prophetic Lawsuit in the Book of Revelation: An Analysis of the Lawsuit Motif in Revelation with Reference to the Old Testament”, 54. Bandy later published his work as Alan S. Bandy, *The Prophetic Lawsuit in the Book of Revelation*. New Testament Monographs (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press Ltd, 2010).

⁷⁷¹ Erhard Gerstenberger, “The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81, no. 3 (1962): 251.

⁷⁷² Ibid. Of the forty-two instances of woe in the NT, all but one, Paul’s rhetorical use in 1 Cor. 9:16, spell out doom and destruction. Furthermore, Rev. includes fourteen of the forty-two, which is exactly one third of the uses, and they all point to destruction.

⁷⁷³ The substantival use of the adjectival participle, οἱ κατοικοῦντες, the ones dwelling, coupled with the prepositional phrase, ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, on the earth, is in Rev. 3:10, 6:10, 8:13, 11:10 (2xs), 13:8, 13:14, 17:2, 17:8.

⁷⁷⁴ Kistemaker does not see this woe as the third woe that Rev. 11:14 says is coming very soon. He bases this on the lack of the article. Since 11:14 says “the” third woe is coming, he sees 12:12 as a generalized woe, Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 365. Bandy sees the third woe in the seventh trumpet in Rev. 16:1ff, as consistent with Rev. 8:13 where the three woes are trumpet blasts, Bandy, “The Prophetic Lawsuit in the Book of Revelation: An Analysis of the Lawsuit Motif in Revelation with Reference to the Old Testament”, 275.

heaven should rejoice, but woe to the earth and its inhabitants. Given the probable presence of an *inclusio*, it is likely that chapter 11 is a warning to the inhabitants of the earth.

As with some of the commentators above, it is entirely possible that measuring in this prophecy is protection. By marking out a line, God protects those within the temple. However, one believes it more likely that this line of demarcation points to the separation between holiness and wickedness.

Adding to the verbal metaphor of measuring in Rev. 11:1 is that John measures the temple. The identification of this temple is one of the most contentious issues in Revelation studies.⁷⁷⁵ But one here argues that the temple, like the lampstands of chapter 1, is a submerged metaphor. However, unlike the lampstands, John does not explicitly reveal the tenor of the metaphor. In keeping with the earlier metaphors of chapter one and other places, John reveals only the vehicle.

The Greek word *ναός* is the word that most English versions of Revelation use for temple. It appears 106 times in Swete's version of the LXX and 105 times in Rahlfs' edition. The word does not appear in the LXX Torah, and appears a favorite in texts surrounding the monarchy, as 1-2 Samuel (3), 1-2 Kings (9), 1-2 Chronicles (14). One could also include Psalms (12) in the list as they relate to the kingship of Israel as well.

Although it can have the sense of sanctuary in the NT,⁷⁷⁶ the LXX tends to translate the word as temple. Many of the contexts surrounding the word in the LXX rule out an interpretation

⁷⁷⁵ So Patterson, quoting Alford, Patterson, *Revelation*, 237. See Kistemaker's discussion of the various historical positions regarding the temple, Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 321-323.

⁷⁷⁶ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 665-666.

of sanctuary, which would be the Holy of Holies,⁷⁷⁷ and the idea of the entire temple is evident.⁷⁷⁸

There are a few instances where the Holy Place may be in view, as well as the Most Holy Place. It appears that 2 Chronicles uses the word often for the Holy Place. In 2 Chron. 4:7-8, the Holy Place, where the lampstands reside in the temple, is likely in view. So too, 2 Chron. 26:16-19 indicates the Holy Place. The context there is King Uzziah attempting to offer incense on the altar of incense, which only the priests could do. He is beside the altar of incense, which is outside the veil of the Most Holy Place,⁷⁷⁹ and he breaks out in leprosy for his act. 2 Chron. 27:2 confirms this as does 2 Chron. 9:7.⁷⁸⁰

It is clear from studying the uses of *ναός* in the LXX, that while it mostly refers to the temple in general, in some references it is the Holy Place, or even possibly the Most Holy Place, those these final references are vague.

It is also clear from studying *ναός*, as it references Israel's temple, that whether the author means the entirety of the temple, or specifically means the Holy Place or Most Holy Place, it is the Lord's temple. The anarthrous genitive *κυρίου*, of the Lord, follows forms of *ναός* in 1 Sam. 1:9, 2 Kgs. 18:16, 2 Kgs. 23:4, 2 Kgs. 24:13, 2 Chron. 15:8, 2 Chron. 26:16, 2 Chron. 27:2, 2 Chron. 29:17, Jdt. 4:2,

⁷⁷⁷ Some possible references where *ναός* refers to the Most Holy Place are 1 Kgs. 6:5, 1 Kgs. 6:17-19 (Rahlf's), 2 Macc. 15:18, 3 Macc. 2:1, LXX-R Ps. 27:2 (although other references in this codex are vague enough to question this, like Ps. 28:9, Ps. 47:10, Ps. 64:5).

⁷⁷⁸ E.g. 1 Sam. 1:9, 1 Sam. 3:3 (although the ark of God is there, Samuel is also lying down there, which eliminates the sanctuary), 1 Kgs. 7:21 (LXX 7:7), 2 Kgs. 18:16, 2 Chron. 3:17, LXX-R Esdras A 1:39, Esdras A 4:45, Esdras A 5:52-64, Jdt. 4:2, Jdt. 4:11, 2 Macc. 8:2, 3 Macc. 5:43. If David is the author of Ps. 5:8, one can eliminate the Holy of Holies since David cannot enter it.

⁷⁷⁹ Exod. 30:6 writes of the altar of incense outside the veil of the Most Holy Place.

⁷⁸⁰ 1 Macc. 4:49-50 is the Holy Place since the discussion there regards the lampstand, altar of incense, and table of the presence. It says the priests lit the lampstand and it gave light to the temple, that is, the Holy Place.

Similar constructions that emphasize the temple belongs to God are Jdt. 5:18, which has “temple of their God,” ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτῶν. Tobit 1:4 has temple of the dwelling of the Most High, ὁ ναὸς τῆς κατασκηνώσεως τοῦ ὑψίστου. 2 Macc. 14:35 temple of your dwelling among us, ναὸν τῆς σῆς σκηνώσεως. Ps. 5:8, Ps. 27:2 have ναὸν ἁγίον σου, your holy temple.⁷⁸¹ Ps. 64:5 has a similar idea, but rather than the genitive κυρίου, has ἅγιος ὁ ναός σου.⁷⁸²

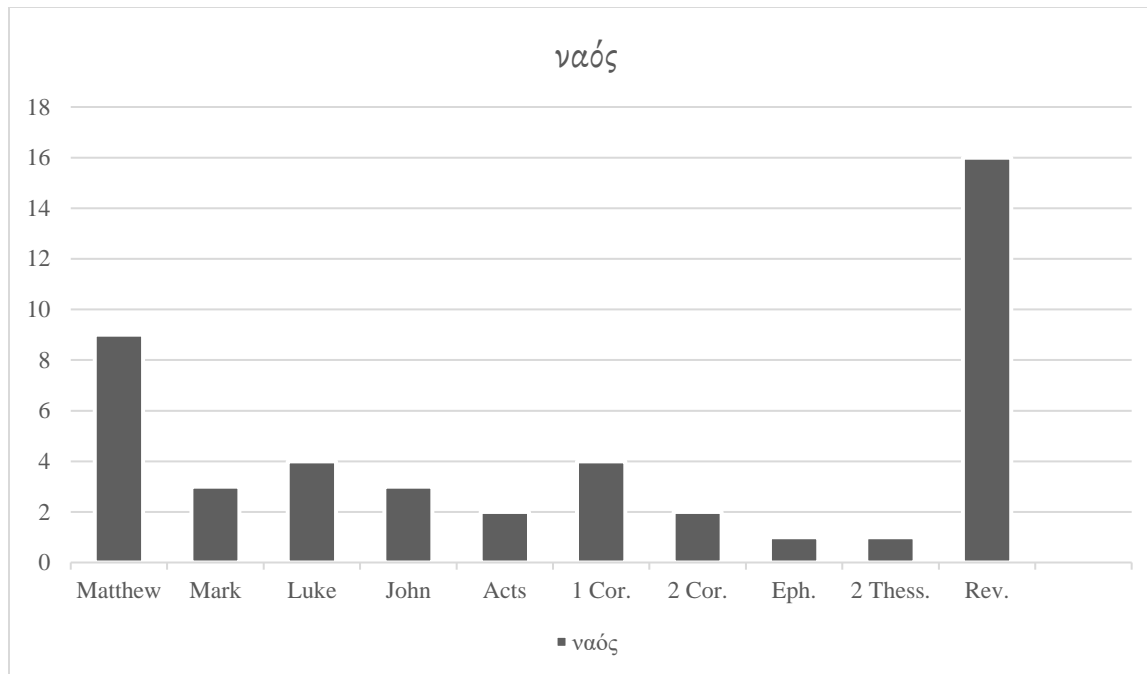
In the NT, ναός occurs 45 times and English Bibles translate it as either sanctuary or temple.⁷⁸³ Revelation has the largest concentration of uses at 16, or 36%, with Matthew a distant second at 9 occurrences, or 20%. However, together they account for more than half of all NT uses.

Ναός appears primarily in narrative texts of the NT. In addition to Matthew’s 9 uses, Mark adds 3, Luke has 4, and John contains 3, and Acts concludes with 2, totaling 21 occurrences in NT narrative outside of Revelation. Only four epistles in the NT contain references to ναός, with 4 in 1 Corinthians, 2 in 2 Corinthians, and one apiece in Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians. The graph below illustrates this breakdown.

⁷⁸¹ Again, if this construction were in the NT, it would fit what Wallace calls the fourth attributive position in an anarthrous noun-adjective construction. That is, an anarthrous noun+anarthrous adjective, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 310.

⁷⁸² If this construction were in the NT, Wallace would place it in the first predicate position of adjective+article+noun, and translate it as, “your temple is holy.” In this case, the author slightly emphasizes the adjective over the noun, *ibid.*, 307. However, one is unaware of any study on such constructions in the LXX. Conybeare and Stock’s section on adjectives only deals with two or three specific adjectives and nothing more on adjectives or positions on the whole, Frederick C. Conybeare and St. George Stock, *Grammar of Septuagint Greek: With Selected Readings, Vocabularies, and Updated Indexes*. Softcover Expanded ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001), 61-64. Neither is anything in Henry St. John Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek: According to the Septuagint*. vol. 1: Introduction, Orthography and Accidence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 172ff.

⁷⁸³ Kistemaker argues that the NT uses ἱερόν for the temple complex, and ναός, for the inner sanctuary, Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 29. His conclusion oversimplifies the NT use.



Generally, translators use sanctuary in Matthew 23, where the word appears five times, 23:16 (2xs), 23:17, 23:21, and 23:25. In this context, Jesus condemns the hypocrisy of the Pharisees because they say that swearing by the sanctuary means nothing, but swearing by the gold of the sanctuary is binding. Jesus then responds in 23:17, by calling them fools, asking, “For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred?” Jesus concludes in 23:21 by saying, “...whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it, and by the one who dwells in it.” The entire chapter ends with Jesus condemning the Pharisees, saying all the righteous blood of the earth comes upon them, including the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, “...whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.”

However, later in Matthew, it appears translators favor a shift from sanctuary to temple. In Matt. 26:61, two witnesses come forward during Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas and accuse Jesus

of saying, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.”⁷⁸⁴ The same phrase comes again in 27:40 when those who pass by the cross mock Jesus.⁷⁸⁵ It is the only reference to temple in Matthew where the word temple, either *ἱερόν*, or *ναός*, has any additional description, in this case, of God, *τοῦ θεοῦ*.

This phrase regarding the destruction of the temple is also interesting in that Matthew never records Jesus saying this,⁷⁸⁶ and it reminds the careful reader that Jesus does not use the word *ναός* for temple in Matthew. Jesus’ discourse in Matt. 23 is the only place Jesus uses the word and he always means sanctuary. Otherwise, Jesus prefers *ἱερόν* for the temple complex as in Matt 12:5-6 and Matt 26:55.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸⁴ Hagner notes that Matthew does not call the witnesses false, regarding their evidence as true, Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 798. Although Moulton makes no mention of Jesus’ alleged saying, he believes that Jesus connects the temple and the fig tree in Mt. 21, where Jesus cleanses the temple and curses the fig tree for not producing fruit. The temple and its cultic entrapments do not produce the fruit God desires (worship and prayer), thus like the tree it will wither. Perhaps this is a part of Jesus’ alleged saying in Matt. 26, Mark Moulton, “Jesus’ Goal For Temple and Tree: A Thematic Revisit of Matt 21:12-22,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 4 (December 1998).

This would be consistent with Evans’ survey of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which reveals beliefs of a corrupt temple, illegitimate high priesthood, and thieving priests. Those holding such views may have sought a spiritual understanding of temple, consistent with the NT, Craig A. Evans, “Opposition to the Temple: Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 248-250.

⁷⁸⁵ It would be an interesting study to determine whether those accusing Jesus mean sanctuary here and if this is a part of their larger strategy against him. Given Jesus’ focus on attacking the Pharisees for their views on swearing by the sanctuary and the altar in the Matt. 23, one wonders if this is a way the witnesses retaliate.

⁷⁸⁶ Something Hagner notes, Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*. Unfortunately, Nolland and Morris both overlook this, both skipping immediately to a discussion of Mark and John, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 1126; Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 682. It is interesting that while John records Jesus specifically saying he was referring to the temple of his body in John 2:21, and records multiple other metaphors regarding Jesus, such as gate, vine, etc. Matthew uses few. Lee, without discussing metaphor theory beyond a brief definition of metaphor, does helpfully note the presence of a body metaphor for Jesus in Matt. 26:26, where Jesus, breaking the bread of the Passover meal, says, “This is my body.” Lee sees the act of eating the bread as metaphorical as well, in that all who eat are participants “in the world of the bread,” Minkyu Lee, *The Breaking of Bread and the Breaking of Boundaries: A Study of the Metaphor of Bread in the Gospel of Matthew*. ed. Hemchand Gossai, Studies in Biblical Literature (New York; Bern; Frankfurt; Berlin; Brussels; Vienna; Oxford; Warsaw: Peter Lang, 2015), 137-138.

⁷⁸⁷ Matthew in general uses *ἱερόν* for the temple complex. See Matt. 4:5, 21:12, 21:14, 21:15, 21:23, and 24:1.

Matt. 27:51 completes Matthew's use of *ναός* and while the NRSV uses temple, it is obviously the sanctuary. Upon Jesus' death, the curtain of the temple tears in two, from top to bottom.⁷⁸⁸

Mark's three uses of *ναός* converge on three of Matthew's uses. Mark 14:58 and 15:29 recount the story of the two witnesses and the mockers at the cross, charging Jesus with saying he would rebuild the temple in three days.⁷⁸⁹ As with Matthew, Mark never actually records Jesus as saying this.⁷⁹⁰ Mark's final reference is the same as Matthew, as Mark 15:38 records the tearing in two of the curtain of the temple.

Mark's reference in 14:58 is also the only place where either Greek word for temple has any additional description. Mark describes it as, τὸν ναὸν τὸν χειροποίητον, the hand-made temple, or, one could translate it, the temple, the hand-made one.⁷⁹¹ Jesus' accusers follow up saying that Jesus claims that he will build another one, not made with human hands, ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον.⁷⁹² In this latter description, the two adjectives are substantival and are in apposition, creating the same emphasis intended in the first reference.⁷⁹³ Here, the emphasis is on "the one not made with human hands."

⁷⁸⁸ While this is the end of the explicit references, there may be implicit references to temple. For instance, Barber compellingly argues that Jesus' language of building in Matt. 16:16-19 presents Jesus as Davidic temple builder and Peter as a priest of that temple. He sees the same verb for building in Matt. 16 as parallel to the promise to rebuild the temple in three days later in Matthew, Michael Patrick Barber, "Jesus as the Davidic Temple Builder and Peter's Priestly Role in Matthew 16:16-19," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 4 (2013): 941.

⁷⁸⁹ Mark, like Matthew, prefers *ἱερόν* for the temple complex, Mark 11:11, 11:15, 11:16, 11:27, 12:35, 13:1, 13:3,

⁷⁹⁰ The only direct speech Mark records from the mouth of Jesus concerning the temple is Mark 14:49. Jesus says, "Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me." Jesus uses *ἱερόν*.

⁷⁹¹ Wallace calls this construction of article+noun+article+adjective, the second attributive position, where "the adjective is added as a sort of climax in apposition with a separate article," Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 306.

⁷⁹² Hogeterp sees this as a potential eschatological prophecy against the cultic establishment and its impurity, Albert L.A. Hogeterp, "Paul and God's Temple: A Historical Interpretation of Cultic Imagery in the Corinthian Correspondence" (Ph.D. diss., Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2004), 153. Hogeterp later published his work as Albert L.A. Hogeterp, *Paul and God's Temple*. Biblical Tools and Studies 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006).

⁷⁹³ For more on the accusative in simple apposition, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 198.

Luke has four references to *ναός* and all refer to the sanctuary. Three of the four are in the Zechariah narrative regarding his offering incense in the sanctuary, but not necessarily the Most Holy Place. Zechariah is offering incense at the altar in the Holy Place in Luke 1:9, 1:21, and 1:22. Only 1:9 adds a description of the temple, calling it *τὸν ναὸν τοῦ κυρίου*, the temple of the Lord. Luke 23:45 like Matthew and Mark, closes the Lucan *ναός* references with the curtain of the temple torn in two.⁷⁹⁴

The only word Luke has in the mouth of Jesus for temple is *ἱερόν* in Luke 18:10, when Jesus tells the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, who went up the temple to pray, and in Luke 22:53, when speaks to the temple police, reminding them, "...I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me."

Unlike Matthew and Mark, who close all temple references in their gospels, regardless of the word, with the torn temple veil, this is not true for Luke, whose final reference to temple uses *ἱερόν*, in Luke 24:53. There the disciples are continually in the temple blessing God, having witnessed Jesus' ascension to heaven.

The Gospel of John, in 2:19, is the only record where Jesus says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," and it is the only narrative context in which John uses the word *ναός*, as all three references are here.⁷⁹⁵ It is also the first time the word *ναός* appears in a narrative context. John 2:19 records Jesus using what one is calling a submerged metaphor. Jesus uses the vehicle *ναός* and later, in 2:21, John reveals that Jesus was speaking about *τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ*

⁷⁹⁴ For efforts to determine corroborating historical sources of these events, see Robert L. Plummer, "Something Awry in the Temple? The Rending of the Temple Veil and Early Jewish Sources that Report Unusual Phenomena in the Temple Around AD 30," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 2 (June 2005). Read also, Daniel M. Gurtner, "The Veil of the Temple in History and Legend," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 1 (March 2006).

⁷⁹⁵ Evans indicates that these words of Jesus are part of a larger action of Jesus against the corruption of the temple, and these words likely contributed to his crucifixion, Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the 'Cave of Robbers': Toward a Jewish Context for the Temple Action," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 3, (1993): 109-110.

σώματος αὐτοῦ, the temple of his body. It is a submerged metaphor, but also a genitive descriptor metaphor. John uses the genitive “of his body” to act as the tenor. One could potentially rewrite the metaphor as, “his body is a temple.”⁷⁹⁶

What happens in John 2:19-21 is a substitutional interaction of words in the metaphor. Jesus substitutes the concept of temple for his body and the vehicle becomes all-consuming in the narrative, to the extent that the Jews cannot see the difference.

That the Jews of John 2:20 do not recognize that Jesus is using a metaphor is not unlike Van der Watt’s discussion of how people can misinterpret some metaphors as entirely literal statements apart from a co-text and a context. This narrative is an example *par excellence*.

Acts 17:24 contains the only reference to ναός as it relates to the temple in Jerusalem.⁷⁹⁷ Paul stands in front of the Areopagus and declares that God, who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands...” The NRSV translates the plural χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς as shrines made by human hands.⁷⁹⁸

Acts 7:48 records a similar idea, where Stephen speaks before the High Priest, and tells him that the “Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands.” Although Stephen uses house instead of temple or sanctuary, the same word for hand-made appears. Stephen is speaking in the context of how God gave Moses the tent of testimony, but David wished to build a house. Stephen then connects this to Isa. 66:1-2, where God says, “Heaven is my throne and

⁷⁹⁶ Meagher suggests that John’s portrayal of the transformation of the physical temple to a new temple, or to Jesus, begins in John 1:14. There, John records, “...the Word became flesh and lived among us...” The Greek word for lived is ἐσκήνωσεν, from σκηνόω, a verb similar to the Greek noun for tent, or tabernacle, John C. Meagher, “John 1:14 and the New Temple,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 1 (1969).

⁷⁹⁷ Acts 19:24 uses the word to describe the shrines of Artemis.

⁷⁹⁸ This is the first attributive anarthrous position, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 309.

the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting place?”

From the perspective of the LXX, the Acts 17 passage appears to echo the prohibition against idolatry in Lev. 26:1 and 26:30, which uses forms of *χειροποίητος* to describe idols and images made by humans. In fact, the same sense is in nearly all the 14 references in Rahlfs and 15 in Swete, to *χειροποίητος* in the OT.⁷⁹⁹

NT uses of *χειροποίητος*, understood in the context of the LXX uses, appear to indicate that the temple is or has become a form of idolatry. Mark 15:48, Acts 7:48, and Acts 17:24, may indicate this.⁸⁰⁰ Eph. 2:11 uses the term as well, regarding the circumcision of the flesh, according to Paul, which is made by human hands. Paul might also be referring to circumcision as a form of idolatry. This circumcision is a point of division between Gentiles and Jews.

It is noteworthy in the discussion of the Ephesians context that it ends in Eph. 2:19-22. This context is also the only use of *ναός* in Ephesians. In 2:19, Paul writes that the Ephesian Christians are members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone.

Paul then indicates that this household of God, this structure, “is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.” The use of the household of God, the holy temple in the Lord, and a spiritual dwelling place for God,⁸⁰¹ are all figurative uses of house, temple, and dwelling place. It

⁷⁹⁹ E.g. LXX Wisdom of Solomon 14:8, Jdt. 8:18, Is. 2:18, Is. 10:11, Is. 19:1, Is. 21:19, Is. 31:7 (2xs), Is. 46:6, Dan. 5:4, Dan. 5:23, Dan. 6:28.

⁸⁰⁰ Heb. 9:11 says Christ came through the greater and perfect tent. The tent is “not made with hands,” that is, not of this creation. Heb. 9:24 also says Christ entered a sanctuary not made with human hands, heaven, which is the presence of God.

⁸⁰¹ Dwelling place, *κατοικητήριον*, occurs only twice in the NT. The other reference, Rev. 18:2, a dwelling place of demons, acts as an unintentional foil to Paul.

is a climactic metaphor, where each use is not separate from the other, but all work together to form a vehicle for the tenor of saints in Ephesus.

Prior to the Ephesians passage, Paul introduces the idea of the temple of God as a metaphor in 1 Cor. 3:16-17.⁸⁰² It is Paul's first use of *ναός* and is a surface metaphor, where both tenor and vehicle are immediately present. Paul says, "Do you not know that you are God's temple," *ναός θεοῦ ἐστε*. The second person verb, *ἐστε*, implies and provides the "you."

Additionally, the genitive "of God," forms a further metaphorical descriptor, connecting it, like the physical temple, to God. Paul's clarifies his intention by appending to the question "...and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" This Spirit of God dwelling in the Corinthians is what makes them God's temple.⁸⁰³

Paul includes the warning that if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. Paul also adds, "God's temple is holy, and you are that temple." The dwelling of God's spirit within the Corinthians also makes them holy, in the same way God's spirit in the physical temple made it holy.

In a slight change to this surface metaphor, in 1 Cor. 6:19, Paul says, "...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit in you." It is another surface metaphor, with both tenor and vehicle present, but the genitive descriptor is "of the Holy Spirit," rather than "of God." The purpose of this metaphor is Paul's exhortation to "glorify God in your body."

Since the word for body is singular, but the "you" is plural, some question arises as to whether Paul means the physical body of each individual believer, or the community. However,

⁸⁰² Sweeney, in writing about Paul and the temple, rightly asks about the curious lack of temple references for someone of Paul's "Jewish pedigree," James Sweeney, "Jesus, Paul, and the Temple: An Exploration of Some Patterns of Continuity," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46, no. 4 (December 2003): 608.

⁸⁰³ Thiselton believes *ναός* "narrows its focus to the issue of holiness and to God's sanctifying indwelling," Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 315.

as Gupta points out, the context of 1 Corinthians, and more broadly, Paul's corpus, demands an understanding of the relationship between the individual's body and the whole body of the believers.⁸⁰⁴ Paul has both in mind. The holiness of each individual affects the holiness of the church.⁸⁰⁵

Paul continues his metaphorical use of *ναός* in 2 Corinthians as well. Paul uses the surface metaphor, "For we are the temple of the living God," in 2 Cor. 6:16. "We" is the tenor, "temple" is the vehicle, and "of the living God," is a genitive descriptor that distinguishes this temple from others.⁸⁰⁶ As in 1 Corinthians, Paul's main goal in using this metaphor is to adjure the Corinthians to righteousness. The co-text makes this evident as 6:14 asks, "...what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness?"

Paul's implied answer is that there is no partnership or fellowship that can exist and he quotes two significant OT passages in making his point. Leviticus 26:11-12 writes that God will place his dwelling amidst his people and walk among them, and He will be their God and they will be his people. This is covenant language and Paul indicates that the Corinthian people are part of a new covenant with God where they are his temple because he dwells with them and walks among them.

⁸⁰⁴ Tasmuth has an interesting thesis that the body and the temple synthesize the Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions of the church in Corinth. The temple satisfies the Jewish tradition of the tabernacle or temple, and the body satisfies the desire of the Greeks and Romans to have shrines of human bodies in their cities and temples. Whether this is true or not, Tasmuth does focus on the holiness of the temple as the preeminent idea, Randar Tasmuth, "Temple, Body, and the Man Within," *Usuteaduslik Ajakiri* 1, (2014): esp. 43-44.

⁸⁰⁵ Nijay Gupta, "Which 'Body' is a Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)? Paul Beyond the Individual/Communal Divide," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72, (2010). Colwell Jr. has a good introduction to the metaphor of temple in 1 Cor. 3. While one does not agree with each point presented, one does support the conclusion, that the "primary analogy is holiness," Michael T. Colwell Jr., "The Metaphor of the Temple in 1 Cor 3:16" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 2003), 46.

⁸⁰⁶ The additional description of God as living is common and sets him apart in the Bible from idols made by human hands or gods that are not gods at all. E.g. read Deut. 5:26, Josh. 3:10, Dan. 6:20, Matt. 26:63, 2 Cor. 3:3.

However, Paul further alludes to Isaiah 52:11, which commands God's people to "touch no unclean thing" and to purify themselves. Paul begins 2 Cor. 7 saying, "Since we have these promises ... let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God." Paul's reference in Ephesians and in each of the Corinthian epistles sharpen the meaning of the metaphor. As the temple of God, God's people are to be holy.

The remaining reference is 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and it is quite ambiguous and debated.⁸⁰⁷ Paul says the Thessalonians do not have to fear that the Lord has already returned because they rebellion has yet to occur and when it does, the lawless one will take his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. The exact meaning of the sanctuary in this co-text is unnecessary for advancing the thesis of this work as Paul's other metaphorical references provide the foundation necessary to continue.

That said, there are those who view Paul's temple in 2 Thessalonians as metaphorical, referring to God's people, as his other temple references have done. If this is so, it is possible to connect this lawless figure to the second beast in Rev. 13:13.⁸⁰⁸ The connection is in each text referring to this figure using signs and deception against people. The Rev. 13:13 beast is an agent of the beast in Rev. 11.

The remaining sixteen references to *ναός* in the NT are in Revelation and it is the only word John uses to describe the temple. A survey here will help in understanding how John may use the term in Revelation 11.

⁸⁰⁷ Wanamaker, while discussing Paul's other metaphorical uses of temple, takes this statement literally, believing the reference to the literal Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem temple, Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 246. Bruce's discussion is unhelpful as he confusingly concludes, "It may be best to conclude that the Jerusalem sanctuary is meant here by Paul and his companions, but meant in a metaphorical sense," Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 169.

⁸⁰⁸ So Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 709.

John begins with the words of Jesus in Rev. 3:12, where Jesus says “to the one conquering”⁸⁰⁹ that he will make this one a pillar in the temple of my God.⁸¹⁰ Jesus continues by saying that he will write the name of the city of my God, the new [sic NRSV] Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven.

Aiding the idea that temple is non-literal in 3:12, Swete argues that the word pillar is a “pure metaphor” in every instance it appears in the NT, offering 1 Tim. 3:15 as one example, where the church of the living God is a pillar and bulwark of truth.⁸¹¹ One calls this is a surface metaphor. In Gal. 2:9, James, Cephas, and John are pillars.⁸¹²

Regardless of how Paul uses the term, Jesus is promising to make a person a pillar. This provides the incongruence expected in copulative metaphor of this nature as a person cannot literally be a pillar. Additionally, this surface metaphor should prime the reader to expect additional figurative language. Many scholars see this as a metaphor, and thus see the temple in the context as metaphor as well.

Beale persuasively demonstrates that this temple is figurative, not referring to a literal, latter-day temple in Jerusalem. The name of God in 3:12 and the name of the city all “intimate ... the presence of God and Christ with their people,” when connected with Rev. 22:3-4 and 14:1-4.⁸¹³

⁸⁰⁹ This is a rare instance of the nominative absolute in the Greek NT, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 52. It emphasizes an emotional title, and one should not translate 3:12 using the contingent “If you conquer,” as in the NRSV.

⁸¹⁰ See Briggs’ argument earlier that pillar refers to permanence, Briggs, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation*, 67-74. This idea fits the co-text where Jesus completes the idea of becoming a pillar by saying, “You will never go out of it.” Kistemaker agrees that the pillar is figurative, arguing that suggestions that its meaning derives from free-standing pillars in ancient temples are unlikely, Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 164.

⁸¹¹ Swete, *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, 56.

⁸¹² Aune gives an overview of interpretations but his own position is ambiguous, Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 241ff.

⁸¹³ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 293.

However, while Beale argues that the coming of Christ in 3:11 indicates in the context that Christ will protect his people through persecution,⁸¹⁴ one here does not see the idea of protection in the text, but rather a call to hold on, endure, and remain holy (vs. 10).

According to Rev. 7:15, those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, are before the throne of God, worshipping him day and night within his temple. It is likely that this statement is non-literal as well. To begin with, the washing of robes in the blood of the Lamb is a verbal metaphor. As the Lamb is Jesus, one would have to understand that the saints literally placed their robes in the blood of Jesus.

Instead, as Kistemaker notes, this likely refers to forgiveness of sin, though he calls the passage symbolic rather than metaphorical.⁸¹⁵ So too Beckwith, who sees it as cleansing from sin, but does not label it as metaphor, symbol, or anything for that matter.⁸¹⁶

This washing indicates a figurative co-text. While the temple in which these saints worship could be literal, one would have to believe a literal, physical structure exists in heaven in which God dwells. The heavenly location is certain due to the presence of God's throne, which Rev. 4:2 places in heaven. It is better to see this simply as the dwelling place God, perhaps akin to something like "heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool."

These two above references in Rev. 3 and Rev. 7 are the only appearances of *ναός* prior to chapter 11. Four appearances are in chapter 11, and the remaining ten instances are all after chapter 11. This may not be a coincidence since Rev. 11 ends with God's temple in heaven open

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.

⁸¹⁵ Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, 258.

⁸¹⁶ Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 545.

and all but two of the remaining references are to the angels who now proceed from this opened heavenly temple and pour out the seven bowls of plagues,⁸¹⁷ which are God's wrath.⁸¹⁸

One will move past the temple references in 11:1-2, and come back to them. For now, the brief survey of ναός in Revelation continues with the two references in Rev. 11:19.

As with other references in the NT, Rev. 11:19 calls this temple, "of God," τοῦ θεοῦ. Normally such nomenclature in the NT would indicate metaphorical use with the church or a believer's body as the tenor and the temple of God as the vehicle. However, this passage adds additional information.

To the temple of God, John adds the construction, ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, the one in heaven. The article ὁ, standing alone, is the anaphoric use of the article, that is, it directs the reader back to the previous reference.⁸¹⁹ That previous reference is temple and the entire phrase clarifies the nature of the temple of God. The temple is in heaven and therefore this is probably not a metaphorical reference to the church or to the bodies of believers. Rather, this is a reference to the place where God dwells.

⁸¹⁷ Only the two references in Rev. 21:22, which say there is no temple in the city, for the temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (NRSV).

⁸¹⁸ Rev. 16:1 uses this genitive metaphor, the seven bowls of God's wrath.

⁸¹⁹ Although Young states that the previous reference is generally anarthrous, lacking the article, this is not always the case, Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*, 57-58.

It seems that the Rev. 3 and Rev. 7 references are to a heavenly temple. Rev. 7 is certain, Rev. 3 a little less so.⁸²⁰ However, given the association with the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven in Rev. 3, it is more probable this is a heavenly temple reference.⁸²¹

This means that the references prior to 11:1-2 and the references from 11:19 on are heavenly, and this places some burden on the interpreter attempting to argue that references in 11:1-2 are to anything other than a heavenly temple.

Rev. 14:15 and 14:17 record an angel and another angel coming out of the temple. The 14:17 passage also uses an anaphoric article construction to clarify to what temple John refers. It is in heaven.

Rev. 15:5 parallels 11:19 in that the temple in heaven opens.⁸²² 15:6, 15:8 (2xs) also refer to a temple in heaven, from which the seven angels with the seven bowls of God's wrath proceed. Uniquely, Rev. 15:5 adds the qualifier τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου, of the tent of the testimony.⁸²³ 15:8 writes that no one can enter the temple until the plagues are finished. Scholars debate the meaning of this pericope and it is beyond the scope of this dissertation.⁸²⁴

In 16:1, a loud voice tells the angels to pour out their bowls. The voice is presumably God's. 16:7 has the same loud voice from the temple proclaiming, "It is done," after the seventh

⁸²⁰ Wiersbe's index, which supposedly includes metaphors, only includes Rev. 7:15 among its metaphorical references to temple in The Apocalypse, Warren W. Wiersbe, s.v. "Temple." *Index of Biblical Images: Similes, Metaphors, and Symbols in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000). The index is an example of a popular level resource that uncritically directs readers to a limited set of metaphors, particularly in Revelation. The publishers do not mention Wiersbe's dispensational agenda in the book, perhaps leaving readers to believe that this is an objective and even exhaustive list of figures of speech in the Bible.

⁸²¹ Overstreet sees the Rev. 3:12 temple as heavenly and notes that John's first and last temple references have the New Jerusalem in common, R. Larry Overstreet, "The Temple of God in the Book of Revelation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166, (October-December 2009): 454.

⁸²² This also parallels 4:1 where John sees heaven open. One wonders if the closing of the temple that occurs later refers to the cessation of visions, since the opening of heaven or the temple seem to indicate the giving of a vision.

⁸²³ Overstreet sees this construction as appositional, Overstreet, "The Temple of God in the Book of Revelation," 458. In this instance, if appositional, it is probably in the category of what Wallace calls ambiguity clarification, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics -- Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 95.

⁸²⁴ Overstreet, "The Temple of God in the Book of Revelation," 458-459; Osborne, *Revelation*, 572.

angel pours out his bowl. These are the final two references aside from 21:22, which states there is no temple in heaven.

While these references inform the passage in Rev. 11:1-2, one is aware that they do not dictate it. As John alters the OT images he uses, he may also be free to change his own images, metaphors, and other figurative language, as his message, context, and co-text demand.

The three general interpretive options in Rev. 11:1-2, from the survey of *ναός* above, indicate one can readily take it in three ways. There is the option of interpreting the temple literally, understanding that whatever takes place, happens to a literal, physical structure. There is the possibility this is literally the temple in heaven, the place where God's presence dwells, along with God's throne. Finally, one can read this as a metaphor, seeing the temple as vehicle in metaphor.⁸²⁵

While scholars adhere to each of the arguments for varying reasons, one believes Rev. 11:1-2 is the vehicle in a submerged metaphor. It is also possible that this metaphor is multivalent, referring to multiple tenors or ideas.

However, one believes that this submerged metaphor refers to the temple of God in the same metaphor to which Paul refers.⁸²⁶ As one previously notes, and will continue to note below, the idea that this temple is literal does not fit into John's style of figurative language. Additionally, if this is heavenly, as in other references, it is curious that John does not specifically write, "in heaven," while using this prepositional phrase in other places. Finally, that John writes of measuring an altar and worshippers and an outer court separates the Rev. 11 reference from other references.

⁸²⁵ Osborne includes a detailed analysis of potential views that exceed these three simple summaries, Osborne, *Revelation*, 408.

⁸²⁶ Peter shares a similar tradition in 1 Pet. 2:4ff.

One understands this as a submerged metaphor that would read, the church is the temple of God. More specifically, this probably refers to the entire church in God's presence, living and dead. John references the altar in 6:9, 8:3, 9:13, 14:18, and 16:7. In each instance, the reference is to the prayers of the saints and the incense altar. Rev. 6:9 writes that under the altar "are the souls of those slaughtered" for the word of God. Thus, the altar likely represents those who have died for the faith. Since this altar is likely in the temple, it is hard to exclude it from the temple imagery. This too would be a submerged metaphor.⁸²⁷

3.9.3 *Co-Text of the Seven Trumpets*

Unlike most of John's other submerged metaphors, the tenor for the temple never appears in the context, leaving all decisions ultimately speculative. Given one's identification of the tenor as the church or even the bodies of individual believers in Paul, this still does not give the meaning of the metaphor. One tries to link the metaphor with its co-text for speculating on its constrained meaning.

An introductory excursus is necessary on the seven trumpets narrative, from 8:1-14:20, as the metaphors and images in 11:1-14 likely gain their meaning from their association to this larger segment.⁸²⁸

One begins with an aside regarding the lack of mention of the type of trumpets that the angels blow. That is, the construction material of the trumpets.⁸²⁹ Many Old Testament contexts

⁸²⁷ This is a similar conclusion to Dalrymple, who believes the use of καὶ is epexegetical, that is, that the altar and its worshippers are clarifications of the temple, Rob Dalrymple, "The Use of καὶ in Revelation 11,1 and the Implications for the Identification of the Temple, the Altar, and the Worshippers," *Biblica* 87, no. 3 (2006).

⁸²⁸ Beale argues that the trumpets narrative begins in 8:6, since there the angels are preparing themselves and have yet to sound the trumpets. He views 8:1-8:5 as a conclusion to the seven seals and a transition to the seven trumpets. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 460-464, 473.

⁸²⁹ Surprisingly, Beale, who includes an excursus on the seven trumpets, does not reference any Hebrew or Greek word studies on the trumpets, which may differentiate between a ram's horn and metal/silver trumpet. He writes only of trumpets and appears to quote only English translations and mostly English commentators while summarizing and debating their interpretations of what the trumpets represent. See *ibid.*, 468-472. Neither do Beckwith, Smalley, or

indicate the type of trumpets blown, in addition to the number or occasion of the blowing. For instance, Lev. 25:9 commands the blowing of a שופר, or ram's horn, to announce the Year of Jubilee. Joshua 6:4 describes the priests carrying שבעת שופרות הַיָּבִילִים, seven rams' horns, in the march around Jericho.

Num. 10:2, however, describes the creation of two, קְצֹצֹתֹת כֶּסֶף, silver trumpets, used for the summoning of the congregation and the breaking of camp. 2 Kgs. 12:13 mentions trumpets (קְצֹצֹתֹת), likely made of metal and probably like the silver trumpets of Num. 10:2, that the returning exiles had yet to refashion for the house of the Lord. Of note is that Joshua 6:5 uses both descriptions for what takes place prior to the fall of Jericho's walls; a long blast on the ram's horn, followed the sound of trumpets, precedes the destruction. Thus, the type of material from which Israel fashioned its trumpets appears to play a role in their purpose and use.

John's failure to mention the material of the trumpets leads to speculation regarding the nature of the trumpets. For while OT Hebrew texts use different words to distinguish between the types of trumpets in various circumstances, OT Greek texts generally make no distinction. For instance, in all the above instances, the LXX renders trumpets as σάλπιγγες, the same word in the Apocalypse. Semantics alone renders the type of trumpets impossible.

Revelation's trumpet material may be intentionally vague or multivalent. It is possible that although metal trumpets are to appear in the temple, which, in a way, is the location of

Aune include such study, although Aune does allude to the Apocalypse of Zephaniah 9-12, where a great angel blows a golden trumpet to introduce scenes, Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 497. Penner and Heiser's case for a Greek original of the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, known to Clement and Hellenistic Jewish Communities, bodes well for John's awareness of the tradition, Michael S. Heiser and Ken Penner, "Apocalypse of Zephaniah," in *Old Testament Greek Pseudepigrapha with Morphology* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008).

John's trumpets, these seven trumpets also carry the allusion to the seven ram's horns of Joshua with the connotation of conquering,⁸³⁰ judgment, and power.⁸³¹

Between 8:1 and 8:2, a subtle yet significant transition takes place. Whereas the Lamb is the character opening the seven seals in the preceding verses, 8:2 introduces the chief participants in the blowing of the seven trumpets as the seven angels,⁸³² standing before God.⁸³³ The absence of the Lamb and direct action of the angels might indicate that the function of the Lamb and the angels is no different from that of the previous chapters,⁸³⁴ namely, that the seven

⁸³⁰ The use of the trumpet in Greek literature relates to conquering, summoning, and more. Plutarch, in recounting Marcellus' siege of Syracuse, writes that the Roman general, after surreptitiously invading one of the city's towers and placing soldiers along the walls, ordered the sounding of trumpets, which put the Syracusans to flight, thinking the city lost. Later, in the same recounting, Plutarch records the Marcellus, to avoid envy, returned triumphant from Syracuse, but refused the typical ovation. He did not ride in a chariot, nor did he wear a laurel or have trumpets sounded, Plutarch, "Marcellus" <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/marcellu.html> (accessed 29 August 2013). Sophocles, in *Ajax*, indicates that messengers used trumpets to summon warriors, and as well as others, e.g. Tecmessa, Ajax's consort, reports to the leader of the chorus that she confronted Ajax prior to his suicide, questioning his awakening and going out without having heard the sound of a messenger's trumpet, Sophocles, "Ajax" <http://classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/ajax.html> (accessed 29 August 2013). In one particular metaphorical use, Aristophanes, in his comedy, *The Clouds*, mocks Socrates for declaring, "the arse of a gnat is a trumpet," in which Socrates debates the origin of a gnat's buzzing. The arse is compared to a trumpet through which the gnat forces air, Aristophanes, "The Clouds" <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristophanes/clouds.html> (accessed 29 August 2013).

⁸³¹ Interestingly Steve Gregg notes that Henry Morris, a futurist, understands the seven horns of the Lamb in 5:6 to be a reference to Joshua 6:4ff, where the priests sounded seven ram's horns, but makes no mention of the seven trumpets. See Gregg, *Revelation, Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, 97.

⁸³² The presence of the definite article, as noted by Beckwith, possibly demonstrates affinity with the seven holy angels, τῶν ἑπτὰ ἁγίων ἀγγέλων, in Tobit 12:15, as well as the seven angels named in Enoch 20:1-8. Beckwith further connects these angels with the "seven holy ones" of Enoch 81:5, the "seven first white ones" and "seven white ones" in Enoch 90:21-22, and the "angels" in the Testament of Levi 3:5, though there appears to be little support for this last reference. See Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 550-551. Following Beckwith, Smalley adds numerous other vague early angelic associations, notably 4Q404, fragment 2:1-10, where the angels are called the "seven chief princes," Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*, 213. Despite these assertions, one wonders if these angels simply represent the seven angels of the seven churches. This understanding provides internal consistency to the book. A later Gnostic reference to seven archangels is Bethge, "On the Origin of the World," 175.

⁸³³ Although Noll may be correct that angels are ancillary with regard to "revelation itself" in the Apocalypse, this should not be taken to diminish their significant narrative roles, Stephen F. Noll, s.v. "Angels, Heavenly Beings, Angel Christology." ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000). Important distinctions exist as to when God, Christ, or the Spirit act directly in the narrative, and when the angels act directly, even when the angels may be acting on behalf of the Trinity. While John may portray the Trinity as the ultimate source of revelation, the angels deliver, mediate, intercede, and carry out many of the narrative actions and dialogue of the Revelation. Understanding this role of the angels may account for their narrative absence in John's account of the New Jerusalem, new heaven, and new earth. It is possible John believes they will be present, though their function may change, given God's direct presence with his people.

⁸³⁴ Note that in the seals' narrative, the first four seals contain the work of four living creatures, not angels. The angels play no role until the seventh seal, differentiating themselves from the living creatures.

angels, by sounding the seven trumpets, are continuing, rather than usurping or replacing, the work inaugurated by the Lamb in the opening of the seals.⁸³⁵

Even so, a more specific action is likely in view for the angels. Rev. 8:3-4 indicate that an angel comes with a golden censor, filled with a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense and the prayers go up before God. The angel then takes the same censor, fills it with fire from the altar, and throws it to earth. Only then do the seven angels with the seven trumpets make ready to sound.

The content of the seven trumpets is a direct response to the prayers of the saints. They are an answer to prayer one might say, and the angel carries out the actions of the response. It would not be the first instance where scripture affiliates angels with answers to prayer. Daniel 10:12 documents that God dispatched the angel Gabriel to Daniel in answer to Daniel's prayers. Luke 1:9 has Gabriel again appearing in answer to prayer, this time to Zechariah to announce the impending birth of his son, John.

This backdrop extends into chapter 10:13 where the sixth angel blows his trumpet. The content of the sixth trumpet and the prophecy of Rev. 11, are the same. The voice from the altar in 10:13 makes it evident that this sixth trumpet links with 8:3-5 where the seven trumpets are a response to prayer. The voice from the altar authorizes the actions that take place after the blowing of the sixth trumpet, indicating that what happens next is a direct answer to the prayers of saints.

Beale rightly sees 10:13 and 8:3-5 as directly parallel to Rev. 6:10-11 where the souls under the altar cry out to the Lord, "...how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood

⁸³⁵ Beale has much to say on these transition verses and correctly points out the differences between the seals and bowls. One does not intend the statement above regarding continuation in any chronological or theological manner, but only regarding literary roles. For more on 8:1-5, see Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, pp. 460-464.

on the inhabitants of the earth?” The text uses the passive voice saying, “They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer,” and until the total number of servants, like them, were “killed.” Presumably, God does these actions and is the one speaking, perhaps through an angel, since the saints direct their prayers toward the Lord.

As the prayers of the saints seek judgment and vengeance, one must see the content of the trumpets as the judgment and vengeance of God against those who murdered the saints. In Rev. 9:13, when the sixth angel blows his trumpet, the judgment involves releasing the four angels bound at the river Euphrates. They ride horses whose heads are like lions, and fire, smoke, and sulfur come the horses’ mouths. The fire, smoke, and sulfur are three plagues that kill a third of humankind.

9:20 then states that those who survived the plagues did not repent of the works of their hands, or give up worshipping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood. Nor did they repent of their murders, sorceries, fornication, or theft.

As the context of the sixth trumpet bleeds into chapter 10, John sees a mighty angel coming down from heaven with a little scroll open in his hand. One should see the arrival of this angel and his scroll as a response to the fact that the survivors of the plagues in chapter 9:20 did not repent. The angel tells John to take the scroll and eat it, which John does, and it tastes sweet in his mouth, but turns his stomach bitter.⁸³⁶ The angel then tells John, “You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.” This prophecy, one believes, is

⁸³⁶ There is a play on words between John’s eating the scroll here in 10 and the message of the witnesses in 11:5. They are the same lemma. John eats the scroll that is a prophecy and the fire from the mouths of the witnesses (probably metaphorical for their message, like the sword in the mouth of Jesus) eats anyone who tries to harm the witnesses.

because the people in 9:20 did not repent. John's prophecy is towards them, which 10:11 now calls, peoples, nations, languages, and kings.⁸³⁷

The taste of the scroll as sweet recalls Ezek. 3:3, where the angel gives Ezekiel a scroll to eat, which fills his stomach, and is sweet in his mouth. The scroll there is a prophecy and the outcome, regarding the house of Israel, is they "will not listen to you... because they have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart." Like those in 9:20 who refused to repent of their ways, the same is true in Ezekiel's context. Given that plagues in Revelation mimic those of the Exodus,⁸³⁸ this all seems to parallel the hardening of Pharaoh's heart each time Moses spoke to him.

This inclusion of kings in 10:11 calls attention back to 6:10-11, which one mentions here. The opening of the sixth seal in chapter 6 is a direct result of the saints crying out, "...how long Lord." Immediately after this, the Lamb opens the sixth seal and the final judgment of the earth begins. In 6:15, the kings of the earth, the magnates, generals, rich, powerful, and everyone, hides in caves begging the caves and mountains to fall on them and hide them "from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. This because "the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Those who can stand are the four angels in 7:1, standing at the four corners of the earth. The great multitude that no one could count in 7:9 is from every nation, tribe, people and language, and they are standing before the throne and before the Lamb. One of the elders in 7:13 tells John that this group are those who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

⁸³⁷ This is against Beale, who sees this prophecy as a continuation of previous prophecies in Revelation, which he sees as universal. He believes the peoples, nations, languages, and kings is equal to 11:9, 13:7, and 14:6, where peoples, nations, tribes, and languages appear.

⁸³⁸ Hall, "The Plagues of the Exodus in the Book of Revelation."

It appears then that a major difference between the description of those whom the Lamb judges in 6:15 and those who stand in 7:13 is the inclusion of kings. Other than descriptions calling Jesus the King of Kings or ruler of the kings of the earth, nearly all references to kings in Revelation are negative.⁸³⁹ Other than 6:15 and 7:13, 9:11ff describe the locusts from the Abyss, who have as king over them Abbadon (Hebrew) or Apollyon (Greek). Rev. 16:12 has kings from the east preparing for battle, with the demonic spirits, on the great day of God the Almighty. Moreover, Rev. 17:2, 17:9, 17:12, and 17:18 all include negative references to kings.

Thus, one sees the prophecy in Rev. 10:11 as for the wicked of the earth, and its kings, and the text of Rev. 11:1-2 is a part of this prophecy. This does not by force of necessity change the meaning of the verbal metaphor for measuring or the submerged metaphors for temple, altar, etc. Most prophecy concerns words of warning along with words of hope, as they cut two directions.

However, given the background of the Ezekiel 40 text that one notes above, one concludes that the measuring in Rev. 11:1-2, is a multivalent metaphor, having a similar purpose to Ezek. 43:10, and 44:1-7, namely that people would be ashamed of their iniquities and to warn that no foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, shall enter God's sanctuary.⁸⁴⁰ This is highly consistent with other parts of Revelation, such as Rev. 21:27 and 22:15 where nothing unclean will ever enter the city and where various groups of the wicked are outside the city. Granted, based on the texts one has already discussed, the people are unlikely to repent and be ashamed of their iniquities, but the prophecy is here nonetheless.

⁸³⁹ Rev. 1:5 has Jesus as ruler of the kings of the earth. Rev. 15:3 calls Jesus the King of the nations. Rev. 19:16 calls Jesus the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

⁸⁴⁰ Bede, in his allegorical interpretation of the temple, sees the interior of the temple as representing, "the life of the perfect and those of sublime sanctity in the holy Church," Bede, *Bede: On the Temple*. trans., Séan Connolly, Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 68.

This does not rule out Beale, and others, who say the measuring is God's protection. Since the sanctuary of Rev. 11:1-2 has worshippers, there are undoubtedly those who do repent of their iniquities, and like the multitude of chapter 7, are safe from judgment.

3.9.4 *The Co-Textual Meaning of Temple Metaphor in Revelation*

The chapter begins with the coordinate *καὶ ἐδόθη*⁸⁴¹ *μοι* ... "and it was given to me."⁸⁴² It indicates that the giving to John, rather than to an angel, may highlight a significant emphasis in the book of Revelation. Of the seventeen uses of *ἐδόθη*, in the book of Revelation, only here is the object or recipient of the verb anything other than a third person personal pronoun. The

⁸⁴¹ Revelation reveals a plausible fondness for the passive use of *δίδωμι*. Fourteen percent of the occurrences of *δίδωμι* in the NT, or 58 of 415, are in Revelation, while thirty-four percent, or 140 occurrences, are in Johannine material. Eighty-five of 415 or twenty percent of total NT uses are passive, while 28, or thirty-three percent of NT passive uses, are Johannine. A surprising seventy-one percent of Johannine passive uses, 23 of 28, appear in the Apocalypse. All passive uses in Revelation are third person, singular, aorist, and indicative. Similarly, 35 of 112 active voice Johannine incidents of *δίδωμι*, or thirty-one percent, are in the Apocalypse. *ἐδόθη* is infrequent in the LXX, appearing 43 times in Ralphs' edition. Wickkiser, in describing Zeus giving Pandora to humans, much like the muses giving poetry to mortals, argues that *δίδωμι* can mean gift, Bronwen L. Wickkiser, "Hesiod and the Fabricated Women: Poetry and Visual Art in the 'Theogony'," *Mnemosyne (Fourth Series)* 63, no. Fasc. 4 (2010): 570. Christensen includes an enlightening discussion of giving as it occurs in the future tense and sees it in many Homeric contexts as gifting, not just giving, Joel P. Christensen, "First-Person Futures in Homer," *American Journal of Philology* 131, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 566.

⁸⁴² Beginning in 6:2 and ending in 19:8, the Apocalypse creates a unique pattern using *καὶ ἐδόθη*; John utilizes this construction seventeen times. In sixteen instances *ἐδόθη* takes as its grammatical object, or theoretical indirect object, a form of *αὐτός*: 6:2, 6:4 (2xs), 8:3, 9:1, 13:5 (2xs), 13:6, 13:7, 13:5, 16:8, all take a third singular, dative, masculine form; 19:8 takes the third singular, dative, feminine form; 9:3 is the third plural, dative, feminine form; 6:8, 6:11, and 9:5, are the third plural, dative, masculine form. Only here in 11:1 does John employ *καὶ ἐδόθη μοι*. It may be that John is calling special attention to this segment. The Wisdom of Solomon 7:7, where *ἐδόθη μοι* appears, may warrant comparative consideration, although the *καὶ* does not appear. Metzger notes that several witnesses attempt to relieve the unusual construction of *ἐδόθη μοι*, Bruce Metzger, "The Revelation to John," in *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 671. However, as one argues above, relieving the construction may obscure an intentional literary device. Curiously, in light of the scarcity of the construction, Bratcher and Hatton ignore its significance, Robert G. Bratcher and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on the Revelation to John*. UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 163. In 8:3, Aune pace UBS4 but following NA27 sees the use of *ἐδόθη* as an outright error, preferring the variant *καὶ ἐδόθησαν*. He sees the insertion of the finite verb as "the author's avoidance of hypotaxis in favor of parataxis," Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 483. That is, the author favors coordinating clauses (parataxis) rather than subordinating clauses (hypotaxis).

following chart may indicate a chiasm, with John's receiving of the reed potentially the focal point of a series of "giving narratives":

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (6:2)
 ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (6:4)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (6:4)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς (6:8)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς (6:11)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (8:3)⁸⁴³
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (9:1)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐταῖς (9:3)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς (9:5)
 Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι (11:1)
 Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (13:5)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (13:5)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (13:7)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (13:7)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (13:15)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (16:8)
 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ (19:8)

Chiasm aside, one understands the events of chapter eleven as corresponding with those of ten. The giving of the little scroll in 10:10 parallels the giving of the rod in 11:1. Similarly, one must pair the dialogue of 10:11 with the dialogue of 11:1. Any metaphorical or symbolic connotation of one ties to the other. Moreover, John embeds both images, as shown below, in a series of concentric contexts, all of which may fall under a singular metaphorical umbrella.

11:1 is a good example of deixis;⁸⁴⁴ the one who gives to John is ambiguous, though it is reasonable that it is the angel of the previous chapter, from whom John takes the little scroll.

However, beyond the need for contextual analysis to solve the mystery of the giver, deixis

⁸⁴³ This appears in NA28 but not UBS5.

⁸⁴⁴ James Paul Gee, *How to Do Discourse Analysis*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 8. Deixis occurs when an author points "to elements of the cotext (the surrounding linguistic context) or the situation context beyond it," Matthew S. DeMoss, s.v. "Deixis." *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

requires some examination of context for determining the physical and temporal location of the characters and events in order that the text's meaning is less uncertain.

In this case, the background of the measuring rod is most likely Ezekiel 40-43, and possibly even 40-48. There, after the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its temple by the Babylonians, Ezekiel has a vision where God takes him to the top of a high mountain and shows him a rebuilt temple. An angelic figure possesses a measuring rod and measures, in detail, the temple, its gates, courts, rooms, and its altar.

Of interest here, is that the angel in Revelation 21:15 also has a measuring rod, but this one is gold. The same language for reed/rod and measure appears in 21:15, but the rod here has the appended “of gold.” If there is a relationship between 11:1 and 21:15, it is striking that John does not give back the rod anywhere in Revelation and it may be that the text is attempting to demonstrate that John is carrying out angelic like duties in Rev. 11:1-2.

While John measures the temple in Rev. 11, the angel measures the holy city in 21:15. It is noteworthy that the nations trample the holy city in Rev. 11:1-2, and it appears that John does not measure it, but in 21:15 the angel now measures the city.

When compared to Ezekiel 40-43, Revelation 11:1-2 is striking in its lack of detail and brevity. John, though given a rod, does not actually measure, and no measurements appear, such as the many cubits in Ezekiel. There are no walls to the temple, no gates, and no inner courts or rooms for the priests. It appears that the function of Rev. 11 is dramatically different from that of Ezekiel.

This lack of detail and the absence of all the gates, courts, and rooms may be one of the more compelling reasons to understand Rev. 11 figuratively. Ezekiel goes into detail regarding the reconstituted sacrifices of the temple and of the restoration of the priesthood. His vision may

indicate a double fulfillment of the rebuilding of another physical temple, such as Zerubbabel's, and it may point to a future eschatological temple. Either way, John's vision is much different.

The lack of information regarding sacrifices is understandable given the focus of Revelation upon the sacrifice of the lamb. If, as one notes above, the physical temple has little bearing upon Christianity as it moved away from Judaism in the book of Acts, and if, as Hebrews 7:27-28 indicates, Christians did not believe in daily sacrifices or sin offerings because Jesus sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself, then the presence of sacrifice in Rev. 11 would be out of place.

The absence of detail for John may also indicate that the nature of the temple in Rev. 11 is fundamentally different from the one in Ezekiel's vision. It does not have walls, gates, or inner courts, because John does not intend to describe a physical temple, but only use certain of the temple's descriptions as metaphors.

Similarly, the voice that speaks, λέγων, to John concerning what he is to do with the staff is ambiguous. It is possible that the speaker is the angel of the previous chapter, but one wonders whether the pattern of chapter 10, God speaking and the angel is giving, is the pattern here.⁸⁴⁵ Perhaps the angel gave John the measuring rod and God told him what to do with it.

That God may be the speaker reinforces that John's measuring is a prophetic message. The measuring focuses on the holiness of the temple, demarcating the line between the holy and the profane. Since nothing unclean may enter a holy temple, this fits the prophetic message of repentance that John is to declare. He is making it clear that only the holy may enter the temple

⁸⁴⁵ Rev. 1:17 also uses λέγων, "saying," and there it is, one "like the son of man" who speaks. However, see Rev. 4:1, 7:3, 7:13, 10:9, 13:14, 14:7, 14:8, 14:9, 14:18, 17:1, 18:2, 18:21, 19:17, and 21:9. Osborne, following Giesen, believes it is both God and Christ who speak and give the measuring rod to John, Osborne, *Revelation*, 409.

and presents a defining line between the people of God, who stand as witnesses against the beast, or evil.

This defining line also reinforces Bickerman's earlier assertion about the literal temple inscription warning foreigners not to enter the temple or face death.⁸⁴⁶ The temple is reserved for the people of God and in Revelation, the measuring of the temple serves as a figurative warning inscription that only the righteous may enter God's presence.

One can assume that since the beast destroys the witnesses, John reinforces the outcome of the wicked refusing to repent and trying to rid themselves of those witnesses who stand against them. Since these witnesses are holy and faithful unto death, God assumes them into heaven.

In the end, it is probably best to see Rev. 11:1-2 as a metaphor of climactic description. Attempting to single out variances in the temple, altar, and worshippers, can border upon the absurd. Along with Beale, and others, these are probably three metaphors climactically describing the people of God. Those not measured are not a part of the people of God.

In this view, there are essentially two courts to this temple, the inner and the outer. All other gradations of the temple disappear considering the torn veil.

The metaphor of the people of God are the temple of God associate at the level of God's dwelling place. As God dwelt in the physical temple of Jerusalem, so he dwells in his people. As God dwells in a temple, the temple is holy, therefore both the physical temple and the people of God associate on the level of holiness. Nothing impure could enter the earthly temple and nothing impure should enter the community of God's people. In fact, when this metaphor of

⁸⁴⁶ Bickerman, "The Warning Inscriptions of Herod's Temple," 391.

temple shifts to the city at the end of Revelation, it is apparent that only those who are holy may enter the city.

Understanding the measuring of the temple as marking off the holy from the profane not only fits the intertextual references to Ezekiel 40-44, but also is consistent with Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to be holy and not defile their bodies or the congregation with immorality.⁸⁴⁷

This also provides the understanding for the testimony of the two witnesses who are the two olive trees and the two lampstands. One has already demonstrated that the two witnesses are juridical. Like the lampstands of chapter one, this metaphor probably references the temple lampstands and the light that the OT associates with the lampstand in the Lord's presence. However, these two witnesses are probably not the churches, seven or two, that so many commentators wish to force upon the text. These witnesses may be lights in the world but are also standing in the presence of the Lord.

One has demonstrated that olive trees often represent people, and, in this co-text, are likely a reference to sacred trees in the temple. They are sacred not because they are trees or a part of some idolatrous worship, but they are sacred by the fact they are in the temple complex, or the presence of the Lord. The witnesses are sacred because they are in the Lord's presence.

One believes that these associations, taken with witness throughout scripture, and taken with the witnesses in Revelation, probably indicate that the two witnesses are true witnesses. In a case involving the death penalty against the unrighteous, these two witnesses carry out their

⁸⁴⁷ Kistemaker agrees with this assessment regarding measuring, writing, "The purpose of making these measurements is to delimit the area that is holy from that which is profane..." Simon J. Kistemaker, "The Temple in the Apocalypse," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43, no. 3 (September 2000): 435.

prophetic function in God's lawsuit against the wicked. Their identities do not matter, only their number, to fulfill the requirements of two witnesses.

Since they are before the Lord, they are sacred, their message is true, and they are holy, able to enter the temple. Their testimony against the unrighteous, who are unable to enter the temple because of their profanity, ultimately leads to their death, but this death is temporary, and cannot exclude them from the temple.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

The Book of Revelation has many interpreters, many of whom have a theological interest in interpreting the text. Theological adherents, that is, mainly Christians from different traditions, cultures, and perspectives, write most of the scholarly literature on the book of Revelation.¹

However, as one proposes in the introduction, these theological traditions often impose unnecessary or unnatural systematic interpretations onto the text of Revelation.² Nowhere is this clearer than in the temple language of Revelation. Some traditions, such as Dispensationalism, require its adherents to impose strictly literal interpretations upon scripture and therefore, when reading the temple language of Revelation, they must assume that John is always referring to a physical temple in Jerusalem. Therefore, their theological system contains complex and difficult teachings on the rebuilding of a physical temple in Jerusalem sometime before the end of the world, because this is, in their system, the only way one can understand the temple language of Revelation, and specifically Rev. 11, in its contexts.

On the other hand, some Christian traditions are quite free in interpreting Revelation's language figuratively, such as those from the improperly labeled Amillennial perspective. However, this too can have drawbacks. Forcing readers to assume that all of John's language is figurative can result in similarly absurd interpretations as those of strict literalists. One shows throughout chapters 1-3 that certain figurative views of John's language fail to understand his metaphors just as readily as literalist positions, because they fail to account for the restrictive

¹ As the bibliography indicates.

² One includes here also political commitments, specifically American political commitments, which are closely bound to certain theological positions. However, one does not explore the political ramifications fully here.

nature of contexts and co-texts, and that even within the same document, a metaphorical vehicle does not always have the same meaning as it interacts with different tenors because the vehicle appears in a different co-text.

One fallacy, for instance, among figurative interpreters of lampstands in Revelation, is the assumption that because the churches are lampstands in Rev. 1, John must also have the churches in view in Rev. 11, because he uses the word lampstands. Although both chapters use the same vehicle, lampstands, they use different tenors, and appear in very different co-texts.

One finds, then, that the middle ground between literalism and figurative theological approaches might lie in the dynamics of metaphor. Using various interpretations and functions of metaphor, one concludes that metaphors consist of a comparison or interaction between the literal and figurative uses of words, resulting in creative, yet truthful statements.³

By looking at how authors across various languages structure metaphor and use metaphor in communication, one proposes that a linguistic metaphor theory, rather than a theological system, may provide readers an alternative to identify which portions of Revelation are literal, which are figurative, and how the two interact creatively.⁴

One believes that allowing natural linguistics processes, in this case, the processes of metaphor, to determine whether to interpret Revelation in literal or figurative terms, is a mediating path forward between two extremes.⁵ In chapter one of the dissertation, the author proposes that most metaphors are at the very least a comparison between two *nomina*, in which

³ Not all metaphors require truthful assertions, but John's metaphors do seek to communicate reality to his readers.

⁴ One believes that an important area for future research in Revelation is to apply the paradigm of the Pragglejazz group to the entirety of the Apocalypse. This paradigm classifies individual words throughout a fixed text as either literal or figurative, that is, metaphorical.

⁵ To be sure, the author is not proposing a linguistic hegemony for interpreting biblical texts, but rather that interpreters should carefully include these in their processes, perhaps more prominently than in previous efforts. Nor is one foolish enough to believe that there is only approach to metaphors, or one linguistic view-point, which interpreters should follow. However, considering various theories of metaphor, and linguistic theories of figurative language, can provide tremendous insight for any interpreter.

some logical incongruity exists between two substantives that cannot be ontological equals. In a surface metaphor, and even in submerged metaphor, the substantive that readers most likely understand as literal is the tenor, and the substantive that readers most likely understand as figurative, is the vehicle.

In this way, metaphor requires both literal and figurative elements to interact in some way to create meaning. Accepting only one aspect, such as the tenor (literal) or the vehicle (figurative), will fail to appreciate the creative way in which an author seeks to communicate his message.

Using the definition that a basic metaphor is a comparison, interaction, etc. between two unlike *nomina*, it is apparent to the reader, for instance, that two human witnesses cannot be, ontologically, two olive trees or two lampstands as one sees in Rev. 11:3-4. A human cannot be a tree or lampstand. One does not need a theological paradigm to determine this is a figurative meaning; one simply needs to be able to understand how metaphorical language works. Studying Rev. 11:3-4 and its lampstands metaphor, in this instance is probably an act of language competence, rather than theological determinacy. Any linguistically competent reader,⁶ even those outside of theological traditions, can find figurative meaning in John's metaphors, so long as one is willing to admit that they are, in fact, metaphors.

Figurative meaning, as derived from metaphorical interaction, is not, as some in certain theological communities may charge, an abandoning of literal, biblical truths, but rather a creative way of communicating truth, in poetic and memorable ways, engaging affective, as well as linguistic and cognitive processes.

⁶ One does not define this as someone who can read well, but someone with skills in the poetics of language, such as figures of speech.

On the other hand, figurative meaning derived from metaphor is not a license to interpret freely, as one sees fit. One demonstrates in chapter one that culture and a language's functions and structures, restrict metaphorical interactions to a limited number of possible meanings because endless possibility is no meaning at all.

These assertions alone should give pause to readers of Revelation. Those of theological traditions should not levy charges of heresy against those not reading the text in the same light, but rather seek common ground in the linguistic situation of the text.

Not only has the imposition of theological paradigms on the Book of Revelation as a first step in interpretation created confusion rather than understanding, it has served to cut off the voices of those who, while not a part of a specific theological tradition, still have a stake in the meaning of the text. Those with pre-determined theological positions should also remain willing to listen to those who, though lacking theological commitments, may contribute to a better understanding of biblical communication. If interpreters worked together in understanding the meaning of the metaphor, rather than arguing as to whether a metaphor exists, perhaps more progress on co-textual meaning would occur.

In the defining of linguistic terms and the methodological description of this dissertation, one did not take avowed theological positions such as those of futurists or historicists as *a priori* assumptions, and one did not assume or assert that the lampstands, and by extension the temple, must be literal or figurative. One attempted to let the conventions of language, specifically those of metaphor, shape the conversation around the language of Rev. 11:3-4 specifically and the entirety of the text in general.

In following this approach, one demonstrated that the lampstands of Rev. 1:20 and Rev. 11:3-4 are metaphors and while sharing some of the same associated common places, they do

not mean the same thing in their respective contexts. Nor are they the same kinds of metaphors, as 1:20 is a submerged metaphor and Rev. 11:3-4 is a surface metaphor, although both are likely a part of a larger composite or complex metaphor in their respective co-texts.

Additionally, another significant contribution to the processing of Revelation's metaphors occurs in chapter one as it relates to Max Black's interaction theory of metaphor, but more specifically, his proposal for finding the meaning of metaphors. One expended extraordinary energy searching the literature of the ANE, with special attention to the OT and Greek literature, to explore what Black calls a system of associated commonplaces. It is a system that relies upon how a culture and language thinks about each of the substantives in a metaphorical comparison, and attempts to determine areas of overlap that may shape the meaning of the metaphor. This means that one must explore fully a culture's perceptions of both *nomina* in the metaphor, such as witnesses and lampstands.

Cultural perceptions are difficult to recreate regarding the ancient world. One proposed in chapter one to search the ANE literature carefully for the uses of each *nomina* in a metaphor, to determine how authors and cultures used these words as instantiated in a co-text. One then proposed potential overlapping of perceptions regarding these instantiated uses of the *nomina*, such as witnesses and lampstands, to determine the actual meaning of the metaphors that one explores.

In proposing a methodology surrounding linguistic metaphor, one also endeavored to better define genre, as it relates to text types and text functions. In the first chapter of the dissertation, one notes that people often believe Revelation is a combination of three to four genres: epistle, apocalyptic (which includes narrative), and prophecy.

One noted that the most common definition of apocalyptic genre, proposed by John Collins, does not include any effort at determining function and expends significant energy looking for commonalities with other texts but does not often acknowledge the substantial differences between Revelation and other so-called apocalyptic texts. Since function is an element of genre, failing to account for function is problematic.

In distinguishing the so-called genres, one concluded that prophecy is not a genre, but a communicative purpose. The function of prophecy is to call God's people to faithfulness, and to call all people to repentance. Thus, one believes that prophecy is a functional term, not a generic term. This function explains the meaning of the lampstands metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4, since the co-textual meaning is one of separating the wicked from the righteous.

One also noted that narrative, as a part of apocalyptic, is also not a genre, but rather a larger text type. Since genre requires textual similarities, as well as common purposes, one would need a grouping of specific types of narrative sharing the same function, to qualify as a genre. However, one did note that the larger text type of narrative has common elements, which includes characterization. An important element of characterization in narrative is the use of analogy, specifically metaphor, to craft character identity. The metaphors that one explores in this dissertation are a part of John's characterization strategy.

One's own discussion of the epistolary elements of Revelation concludes that the scholars too easily dismiss the epistolary structure, since it gives to Revelation its function or social context as well. As many NT epistles include their purpose in a thanksgiving and prayer section, or doxological paragraph, Rev. 1:5-6b, which appears in such a section, helps to guide the functional aspect of Revelation as well. It may be best to preliminarily conclude that apocalypse

may be a genre, epistles are text types, that is, larger categories of writing, and not genres, and prophecy is a literary function, not a genre.

The discussion of genre is necessary since some genres, particularly poetic ones, may be prone to figurative language, as opposed to say, historical narrative, which lays out stark facts. One concludes that Revelation's inclusion in the apocalyptic category, and its prophetic purpose, predispose it to figurative language. Since apocalyptic genres include otherworldly journeys, which are beyond their author's normal earthly experiences, figurative language, or analogical language, is a mechanism by which an author can reveal heavenly truths in ways that allow readers and hearers to relate.

Another important aspect of the apocalyptic genre that one explored in chapter one was the idea of determinism, that is, that good and evil exist and that there are righteous people and wicked people. This determinism abounds in Revelation and this element of the genre aids in later interpreting the lampstands metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4. It appears in a context that separates the righteous from the wicked and the meaning of the lampstands metaphor concretely places the two witnesses, whom John compares to two lampstands and two olive trees, in the realm of the righteous.

Along with defining metaphors and associated common places in chapter one, one also proposed definitions for other forms of figurative language, such as similes, images, symbols, to distinguish them from one another. Many of the commentaries on Revelation fail to define terms carefully and haphazardly conflate symbol, image, and metaphor regularly. This is, in part, due to a lack of linguistic methodology as they tended to focus on theological systems.

Chapter one also explores important literature regarding the temple in the milieu of the New Testament, and in Revelation, and it became clear that the above metaphorical processes are

absent from extent temple discussions. Even in the commentaries and articles that one cites throughout the paper, little to no work on the dynamics of metaphor from a linguistic perspective exists regarding the book of Revelation, and there are certainly no explorations of the lampstands metaphor more specifically. There is a substantial need for formal explorations of metaphors, as well as other figurative language types, within John's Apocalypse.

In chapter two, one proposed a test case. Using the definitions of figurative language from chapter one and exploring the dynamics of metaphor, such as associated common places, one believes that Rev. 1 serves as a guide for understanding the remainder of the book.

Chapter two begins examining what appear to be three obvious metaphors: I am the alpha and the omega in Rev. 1:8; the angels are the stars and the churches are the lampstands, both in 1:20. The method and examination of metaphorical dynamics surrounding these three metaphors serve as a test case for the ultimate focus of the dissertation, the two witnesses are the two lampstands and the two olive trees, in Rev. 11:3-4.

This test chapter is significant in that one argues for the existence of the phenomenon of metaphorical priming. That is, an author or a communicator in some way prepares readers or hearers that what is about to come is metaphorical, or more broadly, figurative. While there are numerous ways to accomplish this in communication, the use of other forms of figurative language, and even a high concentration of metaphors in a co-text, can all serve to make the reader or hearer more aware that a communicator is, in fact, using figurative language and more specifically metaphor.

Since John uses at least three metaphors and a host of similes in Rev. 1, one believes these prime the reader that more figurative language, e.g. metaphors, are to follow. It is not a theological paradigm, but rather a linguistic one, that leads readers to interpret figuratively.

Again, while not trying to discount theological paradigms too much, one concluded that the metaphor, I am the alpha and the omega, suffered too much from Reformed interpreters' theological categories, rather than any real linguistic metaphorical exploration. One demonstrates that rather than communicating God's sovereignty, an important Reformed category, the metaphor communicates God's exclusivity, something with which many Christians interpreters would agree, but sadly do not often acknowledge in Revelation. This meaning derives from a study of associated common places regarding the *nomina* in the metaphor.

In chapter two, one also proposes that similar vehicles within Revelation that take differing tenors, can warrant different meanings, as one indicates in the other two metaphors in the test case, that is, the angels are the stars, and the churches are the lampstands. All metaphors occur within specific contexts and co-texts and when either of these change, there is potential for a shift in meaning. With respect to the lampstands metaphors in Rev. 1:20 and Rev. 11:3-4, both metaphors draw upon similar associated common places, that of lampstands in the tabernacle or temple, and they both contribute to an overarching image of temple in John's Apocalypse. It is an image John constructs of various forms of figurative language, perhaps to communicate the identity and role of the community of God and of individuals within that community as Rev. 1:5b-6 indicates.

Chapter two of the dissertation also notes how one discovered that each of the three metaphors that one surveyed in Rev. 1 relate to characterization in John's narration. Each metaphor intends to inform the reader and hearer more about the attributes and activities of each character. The alpha and omega metaphor confirms the exclusivity of God, affirming that no other gods exist, and therefore the people of God are not only warranted in their worship of God, but must do so to remain in covenant fellowship with him.

The angels are the stars and the lampstands are the churches metaphors reveal that Jesus is a high priest, delivering a message to the church via the angels. The message intends to call God's people to covenant faithfulness, a part of Revelation's prophetic purpose.

This second chapter in the dissertation reveals that John introduces novel metaphors, that is, metaphors for which there are no previous records of use. Although there may be certain cultural and biblical influences undergirding some of these metaphors, John's text is unique in framing his metaphors the way he does.

Since John's purpose is to call God's people to faithfulness, one discovered through a search of associated common places that within the biblical corpus, angels are messengers. Presenting them metaphorically as stars bringing light to the lampstands, that is, the churches, is consistent with their previous associations. In this case, Jesus is the author of the messages, the angels are stars, mediating these messages to the churches, or lampstands, who are the ultimate holders of light, or the message of God.

There is also a significant discussion in chapter two of the dissertation regarding the number seven as a symbol, which John uses in relation with several of his metaphors. Since there are seven lampstands, which John identifies as the seven churches in the province of Asia, it is necessary to distinguish this symbol and its function in the metaphor, from the two *nomina* which form the tenor and vehicle of the metaphor.

A search of ANE literature, including the Bible, concludes that while the number seven is a very special number across cultural boundaries, appearing countless times in various types of literature, there exists no evidence of a single, indisputable meaning for this symbol. Too often scholars go beyond the evidence when attempting to determine the meaning of this numeric symbol. One is left to conclude that its original meaning, particularly within John's culture, may

be lost. In a best-case scenario, the number seven is probably multivalent, with meaning limited to a handful of possibilities.

In chapter three, one brings to bear the definitions and processes of metaphor from the previous two chapters, and engages the lampstands metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4, where John declares the two witnesses are the two lampstands and the two olive trees standing before the Lord. One carefully, though not exhaustively, searched ANE literature for potential associated common places between witnesses, lampstands, and olive trees, as well as exploring the likely meaning of the number two. Whereas the number seven is likely symbolic throughout Revelation, the use of the number two as a symbol is more difficult to identify. One does not believe it is necessarily symbolic in Rev. 11, and its use in Rev. 11:3-4 in conjunction with witnesses is highly restrained and may not carry over to other uses of the number in Revelation.

One shows that while multiple witnesses appear in numerous ANE cultures and laws, the language of two witnesses in legal matters is particularly one of OT tradition, in that it appears often throughout the OT and in rabbinic literature, as well as other Jewish literature of the first century A.D. It is also appearing in the NT as a common requirement.

The language of two witnesses in these legal traditions is not symbolic and thus there is little evidence that one should interpret the number two as symbolic as one did with the number seven. Rather, one concludes that the appearance of two witnesses in Rev. 11 is a legal matter requiring multiple attestation and that the vehicles of olive trees and lampstands further enlighten the reader/hearer regarding the nature of these witnesses and the legal matter in which they are involved.

In attempting to explore what John was communicating regarding these witnesses, it became clear that John again probably used novel metaphors. Although one did find an example

of olive trees as witnesses in the Ephebic oath of the Greeks, its context and usage provided little guidance for John or for this author.

In comparing associated common places, one believes that the presence of olive trees in one's culture and literature generally conveyed positive affective, as well as cognitive meaning. Olive trees took a long time to grow and cultivate, and thus a mature tree likely indicated peace and prosperity since enemy armies tended to cut down fruit trees as acts of punishment, leaving the land decimated. Furthermore, the presence of olive trees indicated robust food sources, as well as one of the most important economic exports of some ANE economies, like Israel. Since Egypt and other wealthy cultures surrounding Israel did not possess their own olive trees, one can see why this was an important commodity for Israel.

One also discovered that priests used pure olive oil for tending the lampstands in the temple. The olive trees in and around Jerusalem, but specifically in and around the temple, were important contributors to this supply of oil. These trees may have even been viewed as sacred, not in the sense of worship, but rather in the sense that they served a holy purpose. This differentiation is important since one shows that olive trees were a part of the sacred cultus of Athens, among other places, and their presence in the sacred temple courts was highly protected.

The lampstands in Revelation likely refer to those lampstands of the tabernacle and then temple cultus in Jerusalem, and thus, when combined with the olive trees, have a sacred, cultic sense. John aids the cultic sense by adding that they are standing before the Lord. This phrase, standing before the Lord, appears in some legal texts of the OT, indicating that God would judge the truthfulness of the witnesses standing before him. When witnesses were at odds with the accused, or with other witnesses, they appeared before the Lord for judgment. These ideas

combine to communicate a positive message concerning the two witnesses in that they are sacred and standing before the Lord.

This indicates that John's metaphors in Rev. 11:3-4, also exist primarily to communicate something about the nature and function of characters within his narration, as one showed in chapter two as well.

When comparing the lampstands of Rev. 1 with those of Rev. 11, one finds that although the lampstands metaphor of Rev. 1:20 and Rev. 11:3-4 have substantial overlap in certain associated common places, there are differences in the meaning of each metaphor. The lampstands in Rev. 1 appear in a priestly context, perhaps of giving light to the world, with Jesus serving as high priest. The subsequent co-text indicates that the image of Jesus walking among the lampstands meant that he had a message for the seven churches regarding their behavior and worship, a message communicated by angels, metaphorically compared with stars.

Rev. 11 is a judgment context, amidst an oracle of woe, where the message is not from Jesus for the churches, but from God to the people of the earth who have refused to repent of their wickedness. Jesus is not present among the churches, walking as a high priest in this metaphor. Instead, the two witnesses, as both olive trees and lampstands, stand against the wicked as faithful witnesses, holy, sacred, and true.

Believing that the lampstands in Rev. 1 have a different meaning than those of Rev. 11, places this author in contrast with many interpreters who also see them as figurative. Although these commentators on Revelation agree that the lampstands are metaphorical, they have no methodological process for determining the meaning of the metaphors, and for distinguishing variant meanings of similar vehicles with different tenors.

This lack of process is acute considering that many interpreters argue that John substantially borrows the image of two olive trees and two lampstands from Zechariah 4. But as one shows in the third chapter, those who believe John borrows from this co-text take an implausibly positive approach to the similarities of the text and do not account for the considerable differences apparent by comparing the LXX of Zech. to the USB5/NA27 of Revelation.

Nor do many interpreters account for the relationship of these olive trees to John's witnesses. Instead, many see the two witnesses as themselves symbols standing for something else, commonly the church of Jesus Christ. This idea of witnesses as symbols in Rev. 11 also possesses no method, demonstrating how John's culture used witnesses as symbols for churches. A lack of method for determining symbolic meaning leads to a lack of constraint and threatens to make John's words an endless string of symbols, resulting in meaninglessness.

One own's method of mapping potential associated common places revealed that in the ANE, lampstands and olive trees often existed in the confines of high places and temples and ancient people regarded them as sacred. Olive trees, especially, played important roles in various ways in the ancient world. They provided food, oil, and wood and were significant economic products. They are far more diverse in association than lampstands. Thus, John must suppress some of these associations to create the meaning he desires in his co-text, such as food. After looking at these potential associations of lampstands and witnesses, one then mapped these associations with those of the witnesses.

Rooted in the legal tradition of the OT, as well as the ANE, the use of multiple witnesses, especially two witnesses in the OT, reveals a cross-cultural propensity for trusting multiple human witnesses more than a single witness, especially when the witness testimony contradicts

that of the accused. Significantly, Greek six-witness documents figured prominently in one's comparisons with the OT, but there was little in ANE literature indicating any favor for two witnesses such as one finds in the OT.

One also demonstrates that the use of two witnesses in the OT has multiple legal contexts, but the most relevant appearance of two witnesses is in capital cases, where death is a likely outcome for the accused. By comparing the Greek of the OT and the Greek of the NT and Revelation, one reveals that John's use of two witnesses is indicative of a capital case, and not among other civil cases requiring two witnesses.⁷ One affirms this conclusion in the judgment context of Rev. 11:3-4, since death is the outcome for those the two witnesses stand against.

Attempting to determine co-textual meaning for positing the truthfulness and faithfulness of these witnesses, chapter three shows one's belief that the measuring of the temple in Rev. 11:1-2 is a verbal metaphor, indicating judgment. Particularly, it shows a demarcation between the righteous and the wicked. When combined with the metaphors of Rev. 11:3-4 regarding lampstands, one posits that the witnesses are a part of the righteous. Their testimony closely relates to the measuring of the temple.

Within Rev. 11:3-4, one argues that the two witnesses stand against the beast from the abyss, and by extension the beast from the earth in Rev. 13, as well as the dragon from Rev. 12. On the testimony of these two faithful, sacred, and true witnesses, God condemns the wicked, especially the beast that kills the two witnesses in Rev. 11, to the second death, as Rev. 19:20 records.

⁷ One mostly focused on Greek consciously as part of method, since metaphors are deeply rooted in culture and language. Metaphors often do not translate well from language to another, or hearers do not affectively process them in the same way. While Hebrew appears throughout the dissertation, it is often by way of comparison.

In this second lampstand metaphor in Rev. 11:3-4, as in the first from Rev. 1:20, John uses a novel lampstand metaphor, and creates the necessary environment for the reader to understand that his new metaphor relates to a legal context. He suppresses certain associated commonplaces of olive trees and lampstands, and chooses their location in the sacred precincts of the temple to highlight the faithfulness and truthfulness of the witnesses. They stand in the presence of God and God adjudicates their testimony as true. In this way, both metaphors of lampstands relate to a message. The first lampstands metaphor is a message from Christ to the churches via the angels, the second is a message from God to the wicked of the earth, regarding their unfaithfulness.

That said, regardless of whether one agrees with the co-textual meaning of the metaphor, that the lampstands appear as metaphors is, from a linguistic standpoint, difficult to dispute. Since the co-text and context are difficult and complex images, one expects variations in co-textual meaning among commentators, but one believes a linguistic metaphor approach can reasonably exclude some variations, such as literalistic approaches and excessively symbolic approaches. There is no doubt, from a reception history perspective, that people go to both extremes in approaching Revelation's text as a matter of history. However, one believes these extremes are inappropriate given John's language.

One argued that the context and co-text of metaphors restricts meaning, as well as associated common places. Those who attempt to interpret John's metaphors apart from co-textual constraint and culturally condition associated common places will fail. Literalists who charge that metaphorical meaning is unrestrained equally overstate their case. One argued previously that unrestrained meaning is not meaning at all.

Finally, as the lampstands are metaphors, as is the altar,⁸ one attempted to show that the temple in Rev. 11 is a metaphor as well. Within the linguistic milieu of Rev. 11, it is difficult to imagine that the lampstands and altar are metaphors and the temple is not. All the metaphors in Rev. 11:1-14 function together to portray a lawsuit image of God's judgment against a wicked world.

In exploring the lampstand metaphor, one believes that references to other temple furniture in the Book of Revelation, and references to the temple itself, are probably, although not necessarily, figurative. The accumulation of so many different figures creates, as one repeatedly stressed, a metaphoric prime for the surrounding text.

Regardless of one's opinion of whether a literal physical temple should stand in Jerusalem, one does not believe John's language contributes to this view. Those supporting such a rebuilding must look elsewhere.

John uses metaphors regularly, including temple metaphors, to accomplish his communicative purposes, which one believes stem from Rev. 1:5b-6, highlighting the work of Jesus as the one who frees John's audience from their sins by his blood, who loves them, and who has made them to be a kingdom and priests. Since John's audience are themselves the tenor in the metaphor of kingdom and priests, it is also difficult to imagine that the temple language does not metaphorically explain the functions of these priests. There is little in Revelation to indicate that John's communicative purposes involve building a physical temple, establishing a physical priesthood, etc. Instead, John defines his community through a multiplicity of metaphors, such as lampstands and temple.

⁸ One did not focus on this metaphor but tangentially discussed it.

Nor should one assume that simply because John's references are metaphorical that there is no reality or history behind them. Metaphors work through interaction between the literal and figurative, and John, while figuratively writing of two witnesses in a judgment context of Rev. 11, seems to be communicating truth through this metaphor to his audience. God will judge the wicked because nothing impure can stand in his presence.

In the end, one believes that this dissertation has uniquely contributed to a discussion of lampstands in Revelation, since no other work of which this writer is aware, exists on the subject to this extent. It also advances the conversation surrounding the Apocalypse regarding figurative and literal language, demonstrating from a linguistic theory of metaphor that both are necessary in interacting to create meaning.

Lastly, the dissertation has also uniquely contributed to the conversation surrounding Revelation since there are no extent efforts proposing a linguistic metaphor theory for examining John's language. There are no efforts using Black's associated common places theory in exploring metaphorical meanings. While this dissertation focuses upon lampstands, its methods and ideas could plausibly explain many other metaphors within Revelation as well. Thus, much work on metaphor in Revelation remains.

One such example is a fuller treatment of characterization in narrative and how metaphor functions specifically within John's entire narrative strategy. John describes many of the characters in his narrative using metaphor. It would be useful to compile a complete list of characters and the metaphors that describe them for future examination.

Moreover, the proposal of a linguistic theory of metaphor, as well as the methodology associated with discovering the meaning of the constituent parts of a metaphor, should change the way people read Revelation. To bifurcate Revelation into literal or figurative camps is

unnecessary in a linguistic theory of metaphor. Figurative language, which one establishes is prevalent in Revelation, requires an interaction between both the literal and figurative. This is especially true for Revelation. It is not a matter of theology, it is a matter of basic human communication. Approaching Revelation with this understanding alerts or primes the reader to read for figurative language.

This same approach may change the way people read the rest of the NT as well. Although other NT texts may not possess the vast number of metaphors that Revelation has, they still appear frequently. Rather than positing overly literal interpretations or extremely fanciful and unconstrained meanings for these metaphors, the exploration of associated common places may provide a way forward in understanding these other NT metaphors as well.

Finally, while the methods in this dissertation will help to understand all NT metaphors, there is specific application to the NT that derives from the work herein. That is, there is more work to do on the use of metaphors in characterization in NT narrative. It is not only John who uses metaphors to describe his characters, nearly all NT authors/narrators use metaphors in their character descriptions at some point. Using the methodology here may shed significant light on the meaning of these metaphors and why particular authors use them in their contexts and co-texts.

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